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WM. LEWIS.

JAY

ON

MARRIAGE.

THOUGHTS

ON

MARRIAGE:

ILLUSTRATING

THE PRINCIPLES AND OBLIGATIONS

OF

THE MARRIAGE RELATION.

Arranged from the Works of

REV. WILLIAM JAY,

AUTHOR OF "MORNING AND EVENING EXERCISES."

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY JAMES LORING.

1833.

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AN

ESSAY ON MARRIAGE;

OR, THE

DUTY OF CHRISTIANS TO MARRY RELIGIOUSLY:

WITH A FEW REFLECTIONS

ON

IMPRUDENT MARRIAGES.

ADVERTISEMENT.

We, the ministers of the Wiltshire Association, assembled together at Melksham this day, October 22, 1806—deploring the little regard of late years paid by too many professors of religion, to the Christian rule of marriage; and deeming it desirable that the attention of the public in general, and our own churches in particular, should be called to this subject, do unanimously request the Rev. Wm. Jay to publish some strictures upon it; and the more so, as he has already set forth a Sermon on the Duties of Husbands and Wives, which has met with great acceptance.

Signed

On behalf of the Association,

George Mantel, Chairman.

ESSAY ON MARRIAGE.

CHAPTER I.

THE PECULIARITY AND IMPORTANCE OF THE MARRIAGE RELATION....THE POSSIBILITY OF KNOWING THE WILL OF GOD IN THIS AFFAIR....THE LAW LAID DOWN.

How wonderful is it, that two persons, who perhaps never met before, should by a train of circumstances be brought together, obtain a peculiar propriety in each other, and form one absolute communion of wishes, joys and sorrows!

If we compare this relation with other connexions, we shall find it surpasses them all. Are other unions *optional?* They may be limited in their continuance, or terminated at

pleasure. But this is permanent, and indissoluble. You cannot marry for a given period. It is for life. Are other unions *natural?* Intimate indeed is the relation between brother and sister: tender is the relation between parents and children, especially between the mother and 'the son of her womb.' 'But for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.'

The marriage connexion therefore is the most singular, and the most important. Hence it can never be viewed with indifference. It cannot be carelessly contemplated by legislators, by politicians, by moralists, by divines. And can it be slightingly regarded by the individuals themselves? The effects extend to families and communities; but how much more powerfully must the consequences affect the parties immediately concerned? Can the scripture, always alive to the welfare of man, Can the scripture pass by such a relation? Impossible. It shows us its divine institution and benediction in Paradise. It shows us our

Saviour gracing with his presence the celebration of a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and displaying 'his glory' by working a miracle to preserve the new-married couple from embarrassment and mortification. It shows us in this condition, characters the most eminent and distinguished for piety and usefulness; witness Enoch, and Peter, and James, and John. It brands with infamy the doctrine that 'forbids to marry.' It often employs the connexion as the image of the union subsisting between Christ and the church. It assures us that 'Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.'

It is obvious therefore that the scripture is far from discouraging marriage. But what it does not condemn, it is careful to regulate. Let us then, my Christian friends, look after the will of God in this momentous and interesting subject.

If ever we err, it is not from any defect in the scripture, but because there is some 'occasion of stumbling in us:' some inattention that hinders examination, or some prejudice

that perverts it. His word is 'a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths.' There is a sufficiency in it for all the useful purposes of 'life and godliness.' Can a man ask at these 'lively oracles,' how he is to conduct himself in prosperity or adversity; can he inquire how he is to govern his family, and train up his children; and be at a loss for an answer?' 'He may run that readeth.' So it is in the case before us. If Christians are really desirous of knowing with whom, in marriage alliance, they are to unite themselves, we make no scruple to say, the revealed will of God is decisive and clear: IT RESTRICTS THEIR CHOICE TO RELIGIOUS CHARACTER ONLY.

CHAPTER II.

THIS LAW ARGUED AND ESTABLISHED.

IF nothing express had been said on this subject, the conclusion might fairly have been drawn, from these general commands which

forbid all chosen and needless association with the irreligious, founded on the danger of contamination.

The case may be confirmed in no inconsiderable degree from the state of the Jews. It is scarcely necessary to mention, that the Jews were forbidden to marry with the surrounding nations. But it may be proper to state two objections.

First. It may be said that the prohibition was confined to the seven accursed nations of Canaan. But this was not the case. Ammonites, Moabites, and Egyptians are reckoned by Ezra among those from whom the returned Israelites were to be separated; and none of these belonged to the race thus devoted to extermination.

Secondly. It may be supposed that this law was political, and regarded this people only in their civil and national capacity. But the futility of this will be demonstrated by remarking, first, that they were allowed to marry with individuals of any of the neighbouring countries when they became proselytes. This shows that the interdiction re-

garded not their nation but their religion. And secondly, that the reason always assigned as the ground of the prohibition is not political, but moral, and therefore universally and constantly binding. Thus we find Moses saying, 'Neither shalt thou make marriages with them: thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son; nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.'

But to come nearer. Have we not in the New Testament a prohibition the most explicit? 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.' We are aware that some are disposed to take this scripture in a larger sense, as forbidding to join with such persons in church communion. But in answer to this, not to remark, what we think cannot be denied, that the expression of yoke-fellow is more used in reference to marriage than to church communion; the former application of it being the natural and original, the latter of course only the borrowed and secondary; I say, not to

avail ourselves of this circumstance, we observe, that we have nothing to fear from admitting the explanation proposed. For if Christians are forbidden to join with unbelievers in church communion, surely they are equally enjoined not to enter with them into marriage contract. What! were the converted Corinthians commanded to 'come out from among them:' and yet be permitted to enter into the closest affinity with them? Were they ordered to be separate and not to 'touch the unclean thing:' and yet be allowed to become one body? Was there to be no 'fellowship between righteousness and unrighteousness, between light and darkness:' and yet were these to be united forever? Was 'he that believeth to have no part with an infidel,' and yet suffer them to be partners for life? Was 'the temple of God to have nothing to do with idols,' and yet were idols to be set up within its walls?

But if this be not deemed sufficient to establish our doctrine, let us attend to the language of the apostle when speaking *expressly* of marriage. 'The wife,' says he, 'is bound by the law, as long as her husband

liveth: but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will: only in the Lord.' Now though this be stated, as the occasion of the words required, in reference to a widow, the limitation unquestionably extends to all Christians in the same relative circumstances. This then is the law of the house. This is the indispensable consideration — ONLY IN THE LORD. Thus the will of God is fully made known, and there are two things we ought to remark with regard to it.

First, He cannot err in his decision. His 'judgment is always according to truth. His understanding is infinite.' He views a subject in all its bearings, in all its consequences, in all the possibilities of its operation. He sees effects in their causes. He knows the end from the beginning. He perceives how we should think, feel, and act in every untried state of being. How qualified therefore is he to undertake to direct us! And to what implicit respect and absolute compliance is the determination of such an adviser entitled!

But secondly, we should remember that his counsel is not advice, but command. Consid-

ered indeed as speaking from a regard to our welfare, a love to our souls, he is the friendly monitor: but as to our obligation to obey, and the danger we incur by trangression, there he is nothing less than a Sovereign. It is at your peril to cast any of his words behind your back. 'See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh.'

CHAPTER III.

THE EVILS OF TRANSGRESSING THE INJUNCTION VARIOUSLY VIEWED.

If people were as easily satisfied in receiving truth as they are in opposing it; if no more was needful to influence the practice than to produce conviction; it might be unnecessary to enlarge after the adduction of the preceding arguments. But alas! in spiritual concerns men venture their souls on such trifling evidence, as, were it to govern them in their temporal affairs, would lead their fellow crea-

tures to conclude that they were either madmen or idiots. Here we need 'line upon line; precept upon precept.' Let us then specify some of the disadvantages and injuries that arise from an infraction of this law among professors of religion. And here we may observe,

That it scandalizes others. It counteracts, discourages, and confounds ministers. It injures the minds of your fellow Christians. It proves a distress to the strong, and 'a stumbling-block to the weak.' It turns that 'which is lame out of the way.' To your pious relations, it occasions the most painful regret and anxiety. 'And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite, who were a grief of mind unto Isaac and Rebekah. And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life, because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these who are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?'

It excites suspicion of your own religion. At least it shows that you are not alive to its

principles and privileges: that if you ask its advice, you can follow your own opinion; and that if you profess to please it, you are not afraid to offend it. Would you marry an enemy of your own, before you believed there was a change of disposition wrought in him? And why? Because you love yourselves — this would prevent it. And if the love of God prevailed in your hearts, would you marry an enemy to God before you discerned in him an evidence of conversion? 'Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee, and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred. I count them mine enemies.' 'What do ye more than others?' Should not the line of distinction between the church and the world be not only real, but visible? Should not the Christian universally appear? Are not his choice and refusal, as well as his sorrow and joy, to evince the empire of religion? 'Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' These are the injunctions of God. And we are to

'esteem all his commandments concerning all things to be right, and to hate every false way.'

Again. We call upon you to remember the duties enjoined upon Christians with regard to their households. The discharge of these duties in married life requires union, countenance, assistance. They cannot be performed to advantage, if at all, where in the heads of the family, there is a contrariety of convictions, dispositions, and pursuits. Peter therefore enforces his admonition upon husbands and wives by this motive, 'that your prayers be not hindered.' For imagine the case we are condemning. Does the man seek the glory of God in all he does, and the woman her own glory? Does the woman make the will of God her rule, and the man his own will? Instead of striving together, they draw adversely, and the design of the union is defeated. Are there children? Some will be likely to adhere to the father; some to the mother. Are there servants? Some will be likely to attach themselves to the master; some to the mistress. Thus the husband and wife will probably keep a perpetual watch over each

other, unwilling to lose any of their respective influence; and the house will be divided against itself.

We observe also, that we personally need every assistance we can receive in our passage to heaven. There is surely enough in ourselves, and in the way we travel, to keep us back without engaging any one constantly to retard our progress, either by opposition or diversion! What need often have we of counsel in spiritual darkness and doubts; of comfort in soul-trouble; of stimulation by reproof or example in our religious languors! 'Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but wo to him that is alone when he walketh: for there is not another to help him up.' He is a friend indeed, who knows the road, will journey with us, and afford us seasonable succour: but what assistance is to be derived from one who has no eyes or hands, or who is going in a contrary direction? Is it enough when we want daily and hourly support, that a companion will not try to interrupt us?

For here—and this is another consideration—here not to help, is to hinder. The very attraction of the mind from high and holy things by continual discourse about other subjects, will be no inconsiderable detriment. For it is by the frequent recurrence of divine things in our thoughts and in our conversation, that we become spiritually-minded, and continue so. Pious emotions may be starved, where they are not assassinated. Fire will be extinguished immediately by water: but it will go out in time, even for want of fuel.

But we do not go too far when we say, that an irreligious connexion is likely to prove the most effectual instrument in the world to injure us, not only by weakening impressions, chilling our affections, and drawing us off by degrees from various duties, but also by perverting the judgment, and enticing to sin. 'They were mingled with the heathen, and learned their works; and they served their idols which became a snare unto them.' 'Evil communications corrupt good manners.' And here several additional things should be seriously considered. For instance,

The example is near—is always in sight. Evil has more power over us than good. An oath when heard, will make a deeper impression than a prayer. Profane images are more easily retained in the mind than pure ones. Evil falls in with our depravity; and always finds in us a friend to welcome and to strengthen it.

The danger is greater if the unconverted party be the husband, as he has the advantage of superior authority and influence.

The more attachment there is, the greater the hazard of moral injury: for affection is wonderfully assimilating. Like fire, it reduces every thing it seizes into its own nature. We are always in a great measure the same with the object of our regard. The image, by its frequent entrance into the mind, and by its residence there, leaves its impression and resemblance.

But if you should escape unhurt morally, which would be little less than a miracle, still you may experience bitter trials; and under these crosses you will not be able to look up to God for support and deliverance with the same

cheerfulness and confidence you would feel if they were afflictions of his sending. But you have chosen them. Hence painful reflections of mind. Hence you may expect to hear as the inquiry of conscience, and as the censure of Providence: 'Hast thou not procured this unto thyself. Thou hast done foolishly; from henceforth thou shalt have wars.' Yea, something of this kind must be expected: 'If my children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments: if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments: then will I visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes.' He has said 'If ye walk contrary to me, I also will walk contrary to you.' And he is a faithful God. And he is able to make good his word. He can take satisfaction out of our chosen delights. He can remove them in his anger. He can leave them to produce leanness in our souls. Though he forgives the iniquities of his people, he takes vengeance on their inventions.

To which we may add, and these are natural and unavoidable consequences, the painful anxiousness of living with those from whom you

fear that you shall be separated forever; and the peculiar disagreeableness of being connected with those who are incapable of the principal part of your affection. Love them you may indeed as husband or wife; but not as believers; not as followers of our Lord, to whom you are allied by stronger ties than human, and which can never be dissolved. Must not this be a vast deduction of happiness; a bitter ingredient in the cup; a kind of daily death?

CHAPTER IV.

THE MISCHIEF HISTORICALLY CONSIDERED.

We may take another view of the breach of this law, and see the evils that resulted from it as natural effects, or as judgments from God, as they are held forth in the scriptures of truth.

This was the particular sin for which God drowned the old world.

Some of Lot's daughters married in Sodom, and perished in the overthrow.

Both Ishmael and Esau married irreligiously, and both were rejected, and turned persecutors.

The first blasphemer that was stoned by God's command is marked as an offspring of one of these marriages—his mother had espoused an Egyptian.

The first captivity of the Jews after their settlement in the Holy Land is ascribed to this cause. The whole passage is very instructive. It is said that the remains of the nations 'were to prove Israel, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandment of the Lord, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses. And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgat the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves: therefore the anger of the Lord

was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushan-rishathaim eight years.'

David married the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur, by whom he had Absalom,—the disgrace and curse of his family.

The case of Solomon is a warning to all ages.

His son Rehoboam, that lost the ten tribes, sprang from one of these forbidden marriages —his mother was an Ammonitess.

The marriage of Ahab is thus awfully noticed: 'And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethball, king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal and worshipped him. But there was none like unto Ahab, who did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.'

What was it that Ezra so grievously lamented, and so sharply reproved? It was, that 'the holy seed had mingled themselves with the people of the land.'

And what says the zealous reformer, Nehemiah? 'Their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things! Yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives!'

'Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.'

CHAPTER V.

EXCUSES TO JUSTIFY DEVIATION FROM IT EXAMINED.

In the history of the church recorded in the New Testament, we find no instances similar to those which have been remarked in the preceding chapter. The rule was too clearly understood, and the reasons on which it was founded, were too powerfully felt, to allow of its violation by the primitive Christians. And indeed one would suppose that a godly character would stand in need of no positive prohibition in such a case as this. It might be expected that his very feelings would secure him. For surely a kind of violence must be offered to his dispositions and principles before such a step can be taken. Accordingly something of this nature is often pleaded. They feel religious reluctance, but speak as if it WERE to be, and MUST be. Let us examine this, and see whether it be their fate or their folly.

Sometimes they plead peculiar circumstances which seem to countenance it. As this is a very common excuse, and by which many are deluded, it demands some notice. And forever to check all encouragement derived from this quarter, let the following things be maturely considered. That such prognostics are rarely, if ever, remarked, but when they fall in with our determination, or at least with our propensity. That when a man 'receives not the love of the truth, God may give him up to strong delusion to believe a lie. That thus saith the Lord God; every man of the house of Israel, that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet: I the Lord will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols: that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols.' That after he has expressly said to Balaam 'go not,' and he finds him still longing for the enterprise, he can say, by an irony which the eager mind will mistake for reality, 'go.' That Jonah was deceived

if he supposed, that when fleeing from the presence of the Lord, it was very providential for him to find a vessel just ready to sail for Tarshish. That circumstances and events are equivocal, having occurred at different times with the most contradictory aspects. That the word of God is our only guide, and that only while walking by this rule shall mercy and peace be upon us. That we are to lay stress on nothing, however singular or striking, that opposes the revealed will of God. That the death of a prophet slain by a lion was written to teach us this very truth: he had received an express command in which he could not be mistaken, and he yielded to another specious suggestion as coming from God, concerning which he could not be sure.

But there is another justification often urged. It is the prospect of being useful. This also is common, and has often ensnared those who ought to 'walk circumspectly; not as fools, but as wise.' Here permit me to ask you the following questions.

Are we to do evil that good may come? It is desirable for a generous Christian to have

property; he will do good with it. But is he to steal or rob in order to obtain it?

Is marriage to be considered as one of the means of grace? Is it ever spoken of in scripture, as intended for the conversion of souls? Is it any where prescribed for this purpose?

Promises and appearances may induce a pleasing hope during the formation of the connexion; but may not these be very fallacious? To admit this, it is not necessary to suppose that the individual is vile enough to deceive wilfully—yet this has frequently been the case; and a regard to the forms of evangelical religion, has been a mere pretence, gradually thrown off as the inducement for using it ceased—but it is not necessary to charge a man with hypocrisy. There are many powerful emotions that are very sincere, and yet not durable. The mind may be softened by affection; and view every thing in reference to its favourite purpose. Men know not themselves; they are not aware how they may feel in new and untried situations. The godliness which they seem even to admire in the general indistinct

notion, and while at a distance, may become very irksome when brought near and acted upon in every instance of life: yea it must be offensive, at least in all its more spiritual parts and exercises, to every natural man. Who, that is not alive to his religious improvement, is likely to love an example that continually admonishes and condemns? Who that is trying to go to sleep loves a noise? Who that wishes to remain in darkness can be fond of light—especially placed so near?

Is it not more consistent with a becoming diffidence of yourselves to fear that you should be injured by the irreligious, rather than that the irreligious should be benefitted by you? We have already shown the danger of this in fact, and which has led an ingenuous author to remark, that he who would pull another out of a pit had need stand firm, or he may be pulled in. We have already mentioned Solomon. Whether Solomon hoped to bring over Pharoah's daughter to worship the true God we know not, but we do know that she brought him over to worship a false one. But we have now to do only with the apprehension

and impression of this truth. Is it consistent with humility to suppose that you can stand where others, and some of them far superior to yourselves, have fallen? Is it consistent with a proper sense of your own weakness to rush into extreme perils, confident, not only that you shall be secure there, but even do good? The very imagination forebodes ill. It looks like the pride that goes before destruction, and the haughty spirit that precedes a fall. Indeed, it is righteous in God to suffer us to fall, when, disobeying his command, we renounce his protection, and venture to proceed without him.

Again. As you conclude that your companion being ungodly will not be able to make you irreligious; what authorizes you to think that your being godly will be able to make him religious? Surely out of your own mouth you are condemned; for the very principle upon which you proceed with regard to yourself should reduce the confidence you indulge with regard to him. If you have no fear that he can impress and influence you, you should have no hope that you can impress and influ-

ence him. If you believe that your love to him will not alter you, you ought not to believe that his love to you will alter him.

And do you consider what human nature is? Do you consider what real religion is? If so, surely you would not think so lightly of accomplishing the conversion of a soul as you now seem to do. If the process be so easy, why are so few converted at all? Why do not all those, who have dear connexions, convert those whom they love and by whom they are beloved?

But you say, You do not expect the result independent of God's influence and blessing: but is not he able to convert them? He is. And we have reason to believe he has in some cases employed his power. For we cannot go the length of Dr. Doddridge, who has remarked, that where Christians have knowingly espoused irreligious characters, he never knew an instance of the conversion of one of them afterwards. But I ask, would you take up an affair so important on a ground so slender? On a mere possibility? For probability there is none. You would not like to marry

a condemned criminal, because he may be pardoned or reprieved. God can make a beggar a gentleman, and yet I presume you would not like to take him on this presumption; you would rather reckon certainly upon a little wealth. Why then marry an unconverted sinner, because God may, because God can, call him by his grace?

Besides, if the acceptance and success of all our endeavours depend wholly upon his favour, can it be a rational way to attain our wishes, to slight his authority, and to provoke his anger by disobedience?

But, to conclude. Even if God should overrule such a connexion for good, you will remember that this is his work, and the glory belongs to him. It does not prove that you have done right; nor can it free the mind from distress in review. For you cannot be so ignorant as not to be able to distinguish between your unrighteousness, and the divine goodness that has thus blest you, notwithstanding all your desert.

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHAT CASES THIS LAW IS NOT BROKEN, THOUGH BOTH THE PARTIES BE NOT RELIGIOUS.

We have thus endeavoured, by placing the subject in various points of light, to prove, that Christians in the business of marriage ought to confine their choice to pious characters only. But to relieve the minds of some who deserve pity rather than censure, let me remark two or three instances in which the rule laid down is not transgressed.

First. It sometimes happens that both parties are ignorant of divine things at the time of marriage, and one is called afterward. When this is the case, the blame does not attach. But the individual renewed by divine grace, now feels pains and anxieties, to which he was before a stranger. It is the nature of grace to excite, with a concern for our own welfare, a concern for the salvation of others, especially of those to whom we are tenderly connected by blood, friendship, or affinity.

How can I endure the thought of being severed forever from her in whom my happiness is so much bound up? 'How can I bear,' will such an Esther say, 'to see the destruction of my kindred?' She will therefore pray, and use every persuasive method to allure. She will endeavour to render her religion lovely and attractive. It is what the scripture enjoins. 'Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also, may without the word, be won by the conversation of the wives: while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.' And for the consolation of such, be it remembered, that after a trial, and perhaps a long one, of their faith and patience, God has frequently heard their petitions, and succeeded their endeavours. After performing religious exercises alone, they have gone to the house of God in company; and have walked together as heirs of the grace of life.

Secondly. Persons may be mistaken after due examination. Every thing admits of counterfeit. There is a specious imitation of every Christian grace as well as of every moral

virtue. But we are not accountable for our inability to read the heart. This is the prerogative of God only. 'By their fruits we are to know them.' If the profession be fair, and the life blameless, there is no objection upon this ground to hinder choice.

Thirdly. There is another case which perhaps to some will not carry the same force of conviction. Yet we do not express ourselves without due deliberation and counsel. It is this. Two individuals, both, at the time of promise, destitute of religion, may solemnly pledge themselves to each other, and before the actual accomplishment of the covenant engagement, one of them may become pious. We will suppose it to be the man. In this case, we affirm that he would not be at liberty to violate his promise, under the pretence of looking out for a character congenial with his present views. If some contend that marriage be nothing more than a civil contract, all must allow that it is nothing less: and not to observe the coercion of the case — not to observe that the law could enforce the claim; the insufficiency of justifying a civil offence by a

religious reason; and the ridiculousness of the attempt—what a dishonour would be done to the cause of the gospel by such prevaricating morality? For such it must appear to the world. Whereas we are to 'have our conversation honest among the Gentiles:' we are not to suffer our 'good' to be 'evil spoken of:' we are to 'avoid the very appearance of evil.' Such is the holy delicacy of the gospel!

This seems to be one of those cases in which a good man 'sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not.' And trying as the scene may be, if by the consent of the other party he be not honourably disengaged, we should advise him to a plain, straight-forward policy; and to expect that in a combination of circumstances so peculiarly providential, all will be overruled for good, either by way of usefulness or trial.

And if even this solemn consideration be not sufficient to discharge a man honourably from one to whom he has contracted himself, will any thing else? Can any thing else? What! is he to trifle with a sacred engagement, and to wound the affections, the respect-

ability, the health, the peace of a female!—because another object comes in view subsequently, in his opinion, more eligible for person, for fortune, for address?!! If a man wished to sink the honour of religion, and to disgrace the value of the Christian—how much more should it ever be the ministerial character! he could not take a step that would more effectually accomplish his purpose.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DISREGARD OF THIS PRINCIPLE LAMENTED.... BUT PIETY THOUGH ESSENTIAL TO CHOICE, NOT SUFFICIENT ALONE TO JUSTIFY IT....MINISTERS UNDER PECULIAR OBLIGATION TO MARRY DISCREETLY.....PRUDENCE NEEDFUL AND RECOMMENDED.

HAPPY those who have formed a union, founded in true godliness, the bonds of which are faith and love in Christ Jesus! They are pleasant in life, and in death not divided. But

how deplorable is it, that this Christian rule of marriage is so frequently trampled upon. The violation is, in the degree of it at least, peculiar to our own age. Our pious ancestors, especially among the non-conformists, would have been shocked at the practice, as appears from their invaluable writings. And I am persuaded that it is very much owing to the prevalence of these indiscriminate and unhallowed connexions, that we have fallen so far short of those men of God who are gone before us, in our seclusion from the world, in the simplicity of our manners, in the uniformity of our profession, in the discharge of family worship, and the training up of our households in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. How could it have been otherwise? Is there not a connexion between causes and effects? Do we sow one kind of grain, and reap another? Can 'men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?'

Guard therefore my Christian friends against every pretence that would draw you into this forbidden path! Establish the unlawfulness and perniciousness of such alliances as 'a principle' in your minds, that when the evil

day of temptation comes, it may find you ready to resist, steadfast in the faith. You should not have your weapons to seek when you want them to use. O woman, do not accept a man, who has all 'the wisdom of the world,' if a stranger to the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.' Do not, it is the rough image of an old divine, do not choose a swine because he has a golden trough. Whatever a man possesses, remember he has nothing, if he has not 'the one thing needful.' O man, be not reconciled to a weak or ugly mind, because it wears a handsome body. 'Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands: and let her own works praise her in the gate.'

But a marriage that is not sinful, may be improper. The apostle himself distinguishes between what is 'lawful,' and what is 'expedient.' Religion is indeed indispensable, but does not alone constitute the propriety of the action. Religion is indeed essential, but is not, abstracted from all other considerations, sufficient to justify choice. To exemplify this a little,

The admission of the piety of the parties does not destroy the indecorum of haste, in marrying immediately after the death of a husband or wife.

The admission of the piety of the parties does not hinder the censure due to a great disparity in years. How unnatural, how indecent is it to see an old man surrounded with infants and babes, which he can scarcely see or hear for the infirmities of age! How unnatural, how odious is it to see a young man fastened to a piece of antiquity — so as to perplex strangers to determine whether he is living with a wife or a mother!

The admission of the piety of the parties does not render in all cases, a difference of sentiment, and of denomination unimportant. It is not lovely for the husband and wife to repair on the Sabbath day morning to separate places of worship. It is not pleasant in remarking what they have heard, after their return home, for the one to censure what the other approves. It is not edifying in the dedication of their common offspring to God by baptism to disagree, not only as to the im-

portance, but also as to the validity of the ordinance. The observation cannot be considered as founded in bigotry, since it will equally apply to both sides of the question, in a number of cases in every religious community, and is derived from the unalterable nature of things. Indeed, to have a preference from conviction, and to adhere to the distinctions arising from it, without condemning others, can never be confounded with illiberality, but by a weak or a vicious mind.

The admission of the piety of the parties cannot preclude the necessity of suitableness. Indeed, religion being supposed, suitableness seems to be the chief requisite to the duty, the respectability, and the happiness of connected life. This fitness takes in an adaptation to each other personally, and also to the situation in which they are called to move. It has commonly been said that no class of men err so much in this article as ministers. But surely this cannot be admitted. It cannot be supposed that those who have opportunities to make the best choice, commonly make the worst. It cannot be supposed that those

whose office it is to inculcate prudence, should be themselves proverbial for indiscretion. It cannot be supposed that those whose incomes are limited, and whose circumstances demand economy, would bring into the management of them, those who have been trained up in delicacy, and extravagance: and are helpless, and profuse. It cannot be supposed that men, whose office is respectable, and productive of social intercourse, would select vulgarity and ignorance, unfit to be either seen or heard, merely because it is pious. A minister is to inculcate order and regularity—and would he marry a female that would render his house a scene of confusion and tumult? A minister is to show how the claims of life and religion harmonize, and to assign to the duties of each, their own place and season—and would he marry a rattle-brain, who instead of being a keeper at home, has been always rambling after some new preacher; who instead of quietly glorifying God in her proper sphere of action, has been endeavouring to excite public attention; who has been zealous in matters of doubtful disputation, but has treated as

beneath her regard, common and relative obligations? Need he be told that a becoming behaviour in a lower and private station, is the surest pledge of, and the best preparation for, a proper behaviour in a higher and more public situation! A minister is to recommend neatness and all the decencies of life—and would he marry a slattern? A minister is to show that the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price—and would he marry a scold? A minister is to stand in the same relation to all his people who demand his love and service—and would he marry a female who would fondly attach herself to a few cronies, listen to all their secrets and divulge her own, and form cabals and schisms, which will render his residence unpleasant, or occasion his removal!

'The attention of ministers,' says Mr. Gilpin, 'in choosing such companions, as may not hinder their success, is of so great importance, that in some countries the conduct of a pastor's wife, as well as that of the pastor himself, is supposed either to edify, or mislead the flock. Nay, the minister himself is frequently con-

demned for the faults of his wife: thus in the Protestant churches of Hungary, they degrade a pastor, whose wife indulges herself in cards, dancing, or any other public amusement that bespeaks the gaiety of a lover of the world, rather than the gravity of a Christian matron. This severity springs from the supposition, that the woman, having promised obedience to her husband, can do nothing but what he either directs or approves. Hence they conclude that example having a greater influence than precept, the wife of a minister, if she be inclined to the world, will preach worldly compliance with more success by her conduct, than her husband can preach worldly renunciation by the most solemn discourses.' And certainly the scandal of many will always be the result of that deplorable inconsistency, which is sometimes seen between the serious instructions of a godly minister, and the trifling behaviour of a woman with whom he is so intimately connected. If the wives of the deacons are to be 'grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things,' what less can be required of the wives of pastors? 'A bishop then must

be blameless; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God!'

Things said indeed concerning the wives of ministers should generally be received with caution. Owing to a line in life, the peculiarity of which is often very little known or considered, their actions and motives may be sometimes condemned, when perhaps, instead of deserving censure, they merit praise. By their union with persons of some distinction and influence, they are in a state to awaken envy, and ill-natured remark. By their occupying a conspicuous station, they are more liable to observation than many in more common life. This renders it needful for them to be peculiarly circumspect and exemplary. And it must be confessed that such females are placed in a situation very difficult and trying. But at the same time, if this situation be filled up properly, they have an opportunity to render themselves truly respectable and useful. In a superior degree, they may 'serve

their generation, according to the will of God.' In such circumstances, examples of prudence, economy, order, neatness, temper, amiableness, domestication, will not fail to strike and impress the minds of numbers.

But there is another view in which we ought to consider such an help-meet. It is the advantage which her husband derives from her, not only personally, but officially, and by which she is rendered a blessing to others. Are his life and exertions and reputation of importance? And does she, by the excellency of her character, reflect honour upon his choice, and secure deference to his judgment? Does she, by her attentions to his personal appearance, the state of his family, and the decorum of his children, add to his respectability and acceptance? Does she, by seasonably aiding his remembrance, contribute to the punctuality of his engagements, his visits, and his correspondence? Does she, by allowing 'her husband to trust safely in her,' discharge him from secular concerns, and keep him free, to pursue his work with undivided attention? Does she, by soothing him under distress, and

tranquillizing him under irritation, preserve his mind in a frame favourable to reflection and study? Does she, by taking care of his health, and spirits, enlarge the number, and lengthen the course of his labours? Such a female deserves the esteem and applause of a congregation, a neighbourhood, a country!

Of what avail are reflections like these to such as have already taken unguarded steps? Are not the consequences irretrievable? They are—but yet they may be improveable. I know it is cold comfort to tell a man, involved in difficulty and distress, that all this might have been avoided, and to upbraid him with the warnings which he refused to take. But will it not be useful for him to ascertain the cause of his mistake, and to review the progress of his infatuation? May he not turn to some good account the lessons of painful experience, and the corrections of maturer judgment? Ought he not to increase in self-knowledge, and self-diffidence? 'Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement: I will not offend any more: that which I see not, teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I

will do no more. Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.'

But there are others whose escape is possible, and for whose preservation we are concerned. I hope that my younger brethren in the sacred office, and those who are under a course of preparation for it, will not be offended at my taking advantage of this address to introduce these free remarks on ministerial marriage:

And by concluding—in calling upon them to show how undeservedly their body has been reproached. Let them beware. Let them see how necessary it is, not only that piety, but prudence should guide them. Let them remember how much their comfort, their honour, their usefulness depend upon a wise, as well as a religious choice. A wrong step here may involve them in embarrassments; make them go mourning down to the grave; strip them of their glory, and take the crown from their head. 'A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself, but the simple pass on, and are punished.'

THE

MUTUAL DUTIES

OF

HUSBANDS AND WIVES:

A DISCOURSE,

OCCASIONED BY

THE MARRIAGE OF R..... S....., ESQ., OF M.....

PREACHED IN ARGYLE-CHAPEL, BATH, AUGUST 16, 1801.

ADVERTISEMENT.

It may be asked, Why is this Discourse published?

The Author has never been afraid to preach on moral subjects. He despises the charge of Legality, and exceedingly dislikes the exclusive application of the term *Evangelical*, to *doctrinal* preaching.

He has also been accustomed to seize events, and circumstances, as they arise, to enliven attention, and diversify public instruction. His much esteemed Friend, whose name he has been compelled to suppress in the title-page, having engaged to worship in his congregation, on the Sabbath previous to his espousals with an amiable young Female who had resided some months in the Author's family — he resolved to select a portion of scripture suitable to the occasion. The occasion was particular, but the subject was general; he therefore enlarged, and delivered the following Discourse. The same day he received a pressing solicitation from his friend to publish; soon after arrived a request, signed by a number of his people, in the name of the rest. The Author respects their judgment, and owes much to their kindness and esteem. The peculiar delicacy and elegance with which these applications are drawn up, would induce him to expose them at length, did not their flattering relation to himself forbid.

It is hoped the Discourse will appear impartial; it was delivered without fear, and without flattery. Long as the Discourse will be found, it was all spoken; the Preacher desiring the audience to exercise a little more patience than usual. He chose to address both at the same time, rather than reserve the duties of either husband or wife to another opportunity. As the Author always preaches without notes, and had written only a general sketch of the subject, some few words and phrases may differ from those delivered in the pulpit; but the sense is completely, and the language nearly the same. Had the Discourse been designed for publication, or studied free from some peculiar interruptions and engagements, it might have been less unworthy of perusal.

Bath, August 24, 1801.

DISCOURSE.

1 Peter iii. 1—7.

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may, without the word, be won by the conversation of the wives, while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel: but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner, in the old time, the holy women also who trusted in God adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

The Governor of the universe is perpetually varying and determining our duties, by the dispensations of his providence, the conditions in which he fixes us, and the connexions he leads us to form. Thus the whole scripture is examined in succession, and every truth of the gospel obtains an application appropriate and impressive.

Marriage is an institution of peculiar importance. It is of divine ordination, and almost coeval with the existence of the human race. It is the origin of families; the source of the continuance and welfare of nations. It distinguishes man from the brute creation, excludes the disorders of licentiousness, and cherishes the sweetest affections of the heart. There is no union, the quality of which is so intimate, the obligation of which is so binding, the consequences of which are so momentous. It even surpasses natural relation; 'and for this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh; what therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.'

Hence the opinion of those who would either banish or degrade marriage, has always been held by the wise and the virtuous, as a sentiment the most vile and injurious, equally destructive of morals and of social happiness. Hence many of the philosophers and legislators, even in the heathen world, were peculiarly solicitous to establish, to sanction, to encourage,

and to regulate this institution. But in this, as well as in every other instance favourable to the welfare of mankind, the 'gospel of our salvation' has the pre-eminence. It classes the prohibition of the ordinance with 'the doctrine of devils;' assures us 'marriage is honourable in all;' leads us back to its commencement in Paradise; renders the bond indissoluble; places it under the jurisdiction of Heaven; takes from it an image to prefigure the union of Christ and his people, and often makes it the subject of particular instruction. It has given us advice, it has given us law; and where is this law so beautifully and largely expressed as in the passage I hold up to view this morning?

I. In the delineation of the duties resulting from marriage, our divine Instructer begins with WIVES—and to animate their attention to the rules he prescribes, he reminds them of the probability of their usefulness to their husbands in a case of all others the most interesting: 'If any obey not the word, they MAY, without the word, be won.'

Religion is not always universal, even in small, detached portions of society. In the same house, there may be an heir of glory, and a son of perdition, natural alliance and spiritual disunion, persons living together in this world between whom, in eternity, there will be a great gulf fixed.

The instance of infidelity and ungodliness is taken from the man; and the apostle marks the piety of the wife, rather than of the husband. Is this mentioned without design? Do not history, experience, and observation favour the probability? Have not women in all denominations, in all ages, in all countries, in all ranks, been more disposed to religion, than men? From how many vices are females restrained by considerations which bear, much less forcibly, on the minds of men? Who depends so much on opinion and esteem, or feels so many motives to preserve reputation unblemished? Denied so often the liberty of divulging their emotions, who so ready to seize the privilege of prayer, and to 'pour out the heart before God? Who so susceptible of lively impressions? Who feels so powerfully

the thrilling of sympathy, or melts down so easily into all the tendernesses of benevolence? While we think, they feel; while we deliberate, they relieve. What woman was ever destitute of commiseration? It was not a woman that unfeelingly 'looked on,' or 'passed by on the other side,' when the poor traveller lay, wounded, bleeding, half dead. Who so accustomed to self-denial, the first, the last lesson, in the school of Christ? Who feels such vicissitudes of health, or passes through scenes of pain and hazard so adapted to excite an entire dependence upon God, and to awaken solemn thought, by bringing another world nearer the view? Less occupied in the distracting concerns of business, she has more time for solitude and reflection. Her general sphere of action, is much more propitious to innocency and devotion. Her joys are more immediately derived from her virtues. Home is the chief place of her amusements. The tenderest cares of nature charm, as well as employ her. The mother is happy to press to her lips and to her bosom the babe she has borne; to feel the stroking hand of her suck-

ling at her breast; to sit by the cradle of her infant daughter; to view from the window the manly exploits of her boy; or

> 'Delightful task, to rear the tender thought,
> To teach the young idea how to shoot,
> To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
> To breathe th' enlivening spirit, and to fix
> The generous purpose in the glowing breast.'

Hence, how often do we see the sister, travelling a road, in which her brother refuses to accompany her; and the wife, living under the power of the gospel, while the husband neglects to hear, or hears with indifference! It were indeed to be wished that real Christians would never contract affinity with the irreligious: they are required to 'marry in the Lord.' The necessity of this law is more than justified, by the discords and miseries in which those involve themselves, who refuse to be governed by it. Therefore no countenance is here given to the practice of being 'unequally yoked together with unbelievers.' But a change may be effected subsequent to marriage. The wife may become religious, while the husband remains a stranger, or a foe. Now

that which should prevent marriage, is not to dissolve it. The relation continues; and the wife, so far from being absolved from her obligation, is furnished with an additional motive to discharge it. 'For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?' Let it excite all thy concern. The salvation of a soul! the salvation of a husband! of one endeared by so many ties! O lose not each other in the 'valley of the shadow of death.' Let your friendship survive the desolations of time, and be renewed to infinite advantage beyond the grave. Think, O wife, of the happiness, the honour that awaits you. What is the triumph you have acquired over him by your charms, compared with the victory you will obtain over him by your religion? What pleasure will attend the remainder of your days; now you are 'of one heart and of one mind:' now you 'take sweet counsel together.' The privileged language of prayer now is, OUR Father; of every motion made 'to go and seek the Lord of Hosts,' there is a ready acceptance, '*I* will go also.' And what will 'be your joy and crown of rejoicing' in that

day when, before assembled men and angels, he will say, 'O blessed be the Providence which attached us in yonder world, and has still more perfectly united us in this. 'The woman thou gavest to be with me' led me not to 'the tree of knowledge of good and evil,' but to 'the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.'

To encourage those who feel the painful affliction of ungodly relations, I would observe that, ultimately, we seldom see one individual only in the household called by grace. She may have the honour of being the first-fruits; but more, commonly follow. She may be long exercised before any favourable indications appear; but how often, at last, are all her prayers heard, and her endeavours crowned with success; prejudices the most inveterate gradually give way; each is successively disposed to hear, till we see them all 'going to the house of God in company.' It is not possible for persons to be much together even in the exercises of common friendship, without impression and effect: we soon imbibe each other's dispositions, and assimilate: 'he that

walketh with wise men shall be wise, and a companion of fools shall be destroyed.' But of all the causes which form our manners, none operates so powerfully as female intercourse. If confined entirely to their company, we become effeminate ; if constantly excluded from it, we contract a roughness of temper, and a negligence of person ; our behaviour assumes a ruder form, our voice a harsher tone ; our sensations are less delicate, our passions more brutal. Who has so many avenues to the heart as a woman ? What influence affects like her's ? By means of a connexion the most attractive, an intercourse the most familiar, the persuasion of words, the eloquence of tears, an example the most lovely and always placed in view, a wife has a thousand opportunities of removing prepossessions, of fixing impressions, of engaging attention, of insinuating goodness. The gospel was spread over a large proportion of Europe, and established in several countries where it prevails to this day, chiefly by women, who, not satisfied with gaining thrones by their charms, rendered their attractions subservient to their religion,

and drew over monarchs to the Christian faith. These are public, splendid achievements, immortalized in history. How many private instances of this sanctified influence are there, unknown to the world, but recorded 'in the book of God's remembrance.' And if, my sisters, your example succeeds in the conversion of a husband from irreligion, shall it not be effectual to reclaim him from inferior mistakes and improprieties? Shall it not advance godliness, where it is already found? warm it, where it is chilled? polish it, where it is rough? and finish it, where it is outline?

And how is all this to be accomplished? Not by eccentric efforts; not by starting out of your sphere, but by exemplifying religion as you move orderly in it; not by preaching, but by living; addressing the eye rather than the ear; employing the eloquence which flows from subjection, conversation, chastity and fear; the manner in which you adorn yourselves; the models you design to imitate.

1. Nothing will increase your influence, and secure your usefulness, more than 'being in SUBJECTION to your own husbands.' This

must, doubtless, be limited and qualified. If the demands of a husband oppose the will of God, you are pre-engaged by a law of universal operation, and 'ought to obey God rather than man.' In other cases, perhaps, it will not be so easy to furnish exceptions. 'Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.'

There is a general rule, the spirit of which would easily settle every relative claim: 'submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.' But it cannot be denied, that a peculiar subjection is in the scriptures required of the wife; not indeed the submission of slaves to their masters, or of subjects to their sovereign, or even of children to a father. It has more of equality in it; accords with the idea of a helper, companion, friend; springs originally from choice; and is acquiesced in for the sake of propriety and advantage. For none of the determinations of God are capricious: all are founded in reason, and all are designed to promote both individual and social welfare. In this regulation, has God acted

partially? Has he sacrificed the happiness of the woman to the dignity of the man? Has he not equally regarded the interest of the wife, the children, and the connexions? In all communities, whether more or less extensive, there can be no happiness without peace, no peace without order, no order without subordination, no subordination without subjection. Perpetual strife would originate from equality, or contested superiority. Numberless contentions would arise, from diversity of views, from difference of temper, and perverse adherence to opposite plans, destroying the harmony and tranquillity of families. The only method by which these disorders can be either precluded or removed, is by establishing pre-eminence and authority, and enjoining submission and acquiescence. This being indispensably necessary, the only question is, Where shall the power of decision be lodged?

From many considerations, expressive of the divine will, the scripture assigns this prerogative to the man. Witness the priority of his creation: 'For Adam was first formed, then Eve.' Witness the manner in which he

derived his being: 'The man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man.' Witness his destiny: 'For the man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man.' 'And the Lord said, it is not good for man to be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.' Witness his relation: 'The man is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man.' Witness the entrance of sin: 'Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression.' Witness the malediction denounced upon the woman: 'Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.' There was nothing originally like a curse in this demand. In Paradise, nothing oppressive or unreasonable, would have appeared in the requisition: and nothing mortifying, would have attended the performance. But the fall has shed the poison—sin has rendered it irksome. The woman is disinclined to obey, while the man is often absurd in his designs, capricious in his temper, tyrannical in his claims, and degrading in his authority. But, my sisters, while you have reason, much reason to complain, re-

member, it is the consequence of sin, the sin of your own sex. Turn the curse into a blessing; derive real honour from seeming disgrace. You cannot dispense with this subjection, without opposing the express will of God, and violating the laws of marriage to which you have acceded by a voluntary engagement, and promised obedience in a manner the most solemn.

2. Much depends upon your 'CONVERSATION.' By this you are to understand all your behaviour, the whole course of your lives. Little is to be done by a single action, or an individual solitary excellence, while other things in the character, so far from aiding its impressions, counteract its tendency, or mar its effects. There is a connexion between duties and virtues: they enliven and enforce, they sustain and recommend each other. The strength of this moral chain to draw, depends upon the concatenation of the links; and the force of this spiritual beauty to strike and captivate, results from the union, harmony, and proportion of all the lineaments. One handsome feature, all surrounded with ugliness, would

excite disgust, or render deformity the more observable.

3. Your conversation is to be always distinguished by 'CHASTITY and FEAR,' and these are to be 'COUPLED.' How natural, how necessary the alliance!

The apostle deems it needless to descend to the grossness of vice, or actual infractions of the marriage covenant. He would intimate, that where there are no such infamous degradations in your sex, there may be an audacity of countenance, a boldness of look, a levity of discourse, a freedom of manners, a forwardness of behaviour, a challenging, obtrusive, advancing air — very unbecoming the sacred decorum which should appear in all the female character. He therefore requires 'FEAR.' It intends the reverse of every thing seen in too many of our modern females — diffidence, bashfulness; the blushings of reserve; the tremulous retiring of modesty; the sensation which arises from the union of innocency and danger; the carefulness which leads you to 'avoid the appearance of evil;' the apprehension, that to be suspected is almost as bad as to be guilty;

the prudence which keeps you far, very far from the extremities of permission; the vigilance which discerns and announces danger, while yet a great way off; the caution that never suffers the outguards to be called in, or the enemy to approach even near enough to reconnoitre. This, my fair hearers, will diffuse a glory over you, which never fails to charm, and upon all the glory will be a defence.

4. Much depends on the manner in which you adorn yourselves; whether you appear the votaries of vanity; or prize your souls; improve your minds; and govern your tempers. 'Whose ADORNING, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel: but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible; even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.'

The sex which rendered clothing necessary, has always been too much disposed to glory in the memorial of our shame. Women have not the same mediums of address with men. They must succeed by means more silent and

disguised. Discovery would often frustrate intention. They know their force lies in their beauty, and seize dress as an auxiliary; they increase natural attractions by artificial assistance. 'Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire?'

Peter knows what is too characteristical in the sex. What he despairs to alter, he labours to improve. Women MUST be fine; WILL be fine. He indulges them; only turning their attention from external decoration to internal accomplishment. Not that he forbids a proper attention to the body. Nothing can be so despicable and disgusting as a slattern; though it has been remarked, that a propensity to it, is often found connected with a love of finery. The body is the work of God; the structure is 'fearfully and wonderfully made.' It is a part of our nature, but it is the inferior part; and this should regulate the degree of attention. A woman of good sense, will always possess a better standard of dress in her own taste, than is to be derived from any precise rules.

She will avoid whatever would appear light

and wanton. The apparel of 'a woman professing godliness,' should not be the attire of a woman of the world, much less, 'the attire of a harlot.' Females sometimes wear a label, on which indecency and indelicacy are written, and then appear to be offended because observers can read. I would not always infer too much of the disposition from these outward hints, but in the name of a blush, on what principle can we explain the invention or adoption of certain modes?—I describe nothing.

She will beware of exceeding her rank, and her circumstances, or even of reducing her means of beneficence. Shall I here avail myself of the season? How many miserable objects are there around you! What an insult on the wretchedness of the times, is the dress of many extravagant females! My fair hearers, escape this censure. Remember Dorcas; enter yonder 'upper chamber;' see the 'widows standing and weeping, and showing the coats and garments which she made while she was with them.' What will afford you most pleasure when you come to die, the recollection of the property you employed in clothing

the naked, or of that which you expended on costly folly? What satisfaction, resulting from the applause of finery, can equal the joy of benevolence that a female feels, while moving among the tears, prayers, and benedictions of gratitude? 'When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness unto me.'

She will keep it from engrossing too much of the mind; she will not suffer it to be either her business or delight; she will not render herself responsible at the bar of God for the awful waste of hours, week, months, shall I add, years! detached from a life as short as it is important, and the whole of which ought to be redeemed!

The apostle speaks comparatively. He would teach women that they have souls; that they are made capable of greater beauty than the body yields; that they ought to adorn the mind; that their endeavours to decorate their persons should be infinitely surpassed by their attention to intellectual accomplishments; that they should be ambitious of moral endowments, and above all things, pay an

attention to the 'HEART.' For what are talents unsanctified? 'Knowledge puffeth up,' but 'charity edifieth.' What are notions the most sublime, and sentiments the most admired, if the disposition be not under the bias of religion? How defective will the whole figure appear, without 'the ornament of a MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT?' What so unsightly, so odious, as a discontented, fretful, foaming, boisterous, scolding woman? 'A continual dropping in a very rainy day, and a contentious woman are alike.' 'It is better to dwell in the corner of a house-top than with a brawling woman in a wide house.' 'It is better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious and an angry woman. Whoso hideth her, hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand, that bewrayeth itself.' The Graces were female: so were the Furies too. Much depends on the cultivation of the mind; more on the regulation of the temper. The necessity of this qualification, in family connexion, is inconceivable. In managing the concerns of a household, how many things will perpetually arise to disappoint, to ruffle, to unhinge, to vex, and

to provoke! These require the command of temper. And there are wives, and there are wives in this assembly, who in 'patience possess their souls;' who can feel, but retain their composure; who can calmly remonstrate, but know not to insist; who can yield and accommodate; who are 'not easily provoked,' but 'easily entreated;' who are disposed rather to endure than complain; and to suffer in secret, rather than disturb others with their grief.

Suffer me then, my fair hearers, to recommend this exchange, this preference of decoration. Like 'the king's daughter, be all glorious within.' Let the Bible be the mirror at which you dress; and while others are weightily engaged in catching a fashion, or adjusting a curl, let the object of your cultivation be the understanding, the memory, the will, the affections, the conscience. Let no part of this internal creation be unadorned: let it sparkle with the diamonds of wisdom, of prudence, of humility, of gentleness. These ornaments alone will confer dignity, and prepare for usefulness. If destitute of these, can you imagine it possible to obtain real, durable

regard? Need you be told, that these skin-deep perfections, those exterior, senseless appendages, imply no excellency in the wearer, and are only admired by the weak, or the worthless? Are you ignorant that men often despise a soul lodged in a form they adore, and admire nonsense, because it is poured from handsome lips? Are you designed for toys, or rational beings? the playthings of the senses, or improving companions? Would you in company keep your husbands on thorns, while they wish you to be seen, and hope you will not be heard; knowing how much more likely you are to strike by the quality and pattern of your robes, than by the insipidity and inanity of your discourse? Adorn yourselves in the newest mode, in the richest attire, plait your hair, deck yourselves with pearls—will these render you valuable? Will these qualify you to manage the concerns of a family, 'to give a portion to your maidens,' to train up your children in wisdom and virtue, to be a help meet for your husband! What! are you endued with reason and immortality, only to be enamoured with a piece of embroidery, or

to pay your devotions to the colour of silk? Are you sublimely resolved never, never to leave the world of fans, and enter the region of intelligence and of mind?

These decorations are 'not CORRUPTIBLE.' All other ornaments 'perish in the using.' All other attire gives place to the shroud. 'Beauty consumes away like a moth;' the sparkling eye 'is closed in darkness;' the body is 'laid in the grave; death shall feed upon it.' The charmer, looking in vain for admirers, says 'to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister.' Prolong life. Accidents may disfigure, and diseases corrode. How quickly time changes the countenance! How transient the empire of colours and of tints! How soon wrinkles and gaudy attire disagree! Having laid in no stock of mental influence, and sober entertainment against the evil day, what becomes of these delightful creatures? A few years reduce them to insignificance, leaving them only the humiliating claims of pity, or the uncertain returns of gratitude. But an accomplished, pious woman, can never be the object of ne-

glect; she will attract notice, and confer happiness, even when descending into the vale of years. The ravages of time cannot reach the soul: death cannot strip off the habits of immortality: it will only change her 'from glory to glory:' only remove her from earth, unworthy of continuance, and place her among 'the innumerable company of angels.'

In adorning ourselves, the opinion of others is very influential; especially if the admirers discover taste, possess sway, or can give law to fashion. This decoration 'is in the SIGHT OF GOD of great price.' 'Not' she 'who commendeth herself is approved, but whom the LORD commendeth.' What is 'the honour that cometh from man?' How wavering, how vain, how debasing! But 'the honour that cometh from GOD only,' is purifying, satisfying, enduring. It is impossible to feel a complacency in ourselves, while conscious that we are disesteemed by a Being of infinite wisdom, excellency, and goodness. His 'judgment is always according to truth.' 'In his favour is life;' on his applause our happiness depends; and in vain we approach him with

any of those distinctions which dazzle and deceive mankind; for 'the LORD taketh pleasure' only 'in them that fear him, in them that hope in his mercy.'

5. Much depends on the MODELS you choose for imitation. The apostle would have you conform, not to the flutterers of fashion, not to the triflers of a day, who live only to please, and derive all their consequence from vanity; but an illustrious company of female worthies, who drew towards them the eye of God, who served their generation according to his will, who obtained a distinguished place in the annals of inspiration, whose names have been long glorified, and will be 'had in everlasting remembrance.' 'A gracious woman retaineth honour.' 'Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised: give her of the fruit of her hand, and let her own works praise her in the gates.' 'For after this manner in the old time, the holy women also who trusted in God adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands: even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose DAUGHTERS

ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.' The honour of this alliance awaits you, however inferior in talents, however obscure in your stations, however poor in your circumstances, here is a passage, by which you may obtain a place in this glorious assembly, and sit down by the side of a Lydia, a Mary, a Hannah, a Deborah, a Sarah, 'in the kingdom of God.' For by what are these pious women distinguished? By excellencies which fall within the reach of general imitation: by preferring the soul to the body; by meekness and gentleness; by modesty and reserve; by a ready submission to the demands of their stations. Thus Sarah, though of the same family with her husband, and distinguished by peculiar honours, never rose above the most humble duties of her situation; never suffered even the princess, to injure the wife; and, willingly yielded Abraham reverence and obedience.

But in all these instances, you will never 'do well,' and become the 'daughters' of Sarah, unless you maintain a holy MAGNANIMITY; 'NOT BEING AFRAID WITH ANY AMAZEMENT'

—so as to be staggered, confounded, dismayed, in the course of prescribed duty. There can be no impartial obedience, or unwavering perseverance in religion, without courage and confidence. The man needs it, the woman needs it: the husband requires it, and the wife equally requires it. It would be rendered still more necessary, were a period to arrive, in which every airy speculation would be preferred to practice; things important, because plain and of old standing, would be lightly esteemed; and nothing would strike, nothing be relished, unless dressed up in novelty, and seasoned with extravagance. Such, my female friends, is the period in which we live. Many of the things which we have been recommending on sacred ground, would be considered as barbarous notions, as ignorance of the world, prejudices which philosophy would cure, the airs of hypocrisy, the effects of prudishness. Can you form yourselves by these rules? Can you encounter opinion? Can you bear the charge of singularity? Can you abandon the multitude, laughing or lampooning as you retire? Can you live according to the dictates of rea-

son, of conscience, and of God? Be principled —be decided—be resolved—be firm. Having formed your views in the divine presence, and feeling all your motives, go forth, and be steadfast and unmoveable, in the execution; 'always abounding in the work of the Lord.'

There is another instance in which these pious women exercised confidence—depending on the providence of God, staying themselves by faith on his promises; and thus looking forward with a firm, unruffled mind towards those trying, painful, perilous events which were expected to befall them. The scripture, with its usual tenderness, furnishes the woman with this soothing, tranquillizing hope, in prospect of a season the most anxious, 'Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbirth, if they continue in faith and charity, and holiness, with sobriety.'

II. Men and Brethren, you have been hearing my address to the companions of your lives. But I hope you deem instruction equally necessary for yourselves. I hope you are not inclined to take advantage of the subject,

to abuse your authority or your claims. Be assured they are not unqualified. If the wife is to be governed by you, you are to be governed by reason and religion. If she is to submit, you are to honour. If in some things there is a difference, in others, and those too the most interesting and durable, there is an equality. 'Likewise, ye HUSBANDS, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel; and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.' Observe, my brethren, 1st, the representation of your duty; and 2dly, the motives by which, it is enforced.

The representation of your duty comprehends two things.

1. You are to 'DWELL with them ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE.' This intends nothing less than residence, opposed to absence and roving. It is absurd for those who have no prospect of cohabitation to enter this state, and those who are already in it, should not be unnecessarily abroad. Circumstances of various kinds will doubtless render occasional ex-

cursions unavoidable ; but let a man return as soon as the design of his absence is accomplished, and let him always travel with the words of Solomom in his mind, 'As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.' Can a man, while from home, discharge the duties he owes to his household ? Can he discipline his children ? Can he maintain the worship of God in his family ? I know it is the duty of the wife to lead the devotion in the absence of the husband ; and she should take it up as a cross, if not for the time as a privilege. Few however are thus disposed, and hence one of the sanctuaries of God, for weeks and months together, is shut up. I am sorry to say, there are some husbands who seem fonder of any society than the company of their wives. It appears in the disposal of their leisure hours. How few of these are appropriated to the wife ! The evenings are the most domestic periods of the day. To these the wife is peculiarly entitled ; she is now most free from her numerous cares, and most at liberty to enjoy reading and conversation. It is a sad reflection upon a man

when he is fond of spending his evenings abroad. It implies something bad, and it predicts something worse.

But though the apostle intends nothing less than residence, he designs much more. Residence is required with a view to the performance of all the duties of the state, and is used to express them. In the discharge of these obligations, the husband is to act 'according to knowledge,' to 'behave' himself 'wisely,' to regulate all his proceedings by a holy discretion. O ye husbands, show that you are capable of the relation in which you are placed! If you will be the head, remember the head is not only the seat of government, but of knowledge. If you will have the management of the ship, see that a fool is not placed at the helm. Shall the blind offer themselves as guides? To enable you to live as a Christian husband, in how many instances will the exercise of an enlightened prudence be found necessary! By this you are to ascertain the temper, the excellencies, the foible of your associates. This is to teach you, how to accommodate. This is to show you, when to

see as if you saw not, and to hear as if you heard not. This is to tell you how to extinguish the torch of discord; how even to prevent the kindling of strife; when to give up, when to recede from a lawful claim for the sake of a greater good. This is to teach you also, when you are NOT to yield. Adam, to indulge the solicitation of his wife, disobeyed the commands of Heaven. By the same soft, seducing instrumentality, the heart of Solomon was turned aside from God. Their sad examples have been unhappily, too often followed. But, would she force upon you her antipathies; would she embroil you in all the resentments of caprice, or rivalry; would she allure you towards scenes of dissipation and gaiety; would she urge you to extravagance in appearances, dress, table, furniture; would she chill you with suspicions, and render you less generous; the importunity of woman, 'lovely woman,' is to be in vain. 'He that loveth' even 'his WIFE more than me, is not worthy of me.'

2dly. You are to 'give HONOUR unto the wife.'—What honour?

The honour of ESTEEM. This is to arise from a consciousness of her worth, and a knowledge of her importance in the community, in the family, and to yourselves, by polishing your character, dividing your cares, soothing your sorrows, affording you in a peaceful home a refuge from the storm, an asylum from the mortifications of an unfriendly world.

The honour of ATTACHMENT. This affection is to be peculiar, undivided, unrivalled. Nothing is to wear it away, nothing to diminish it: no length of time, no discovery of imperfection. Children are parts of yourselves, but your wives ARE yourselves. 'No MAN ever yet hated his own flesh:' but many a MONSTER has done so. I disdain to notice those miscreants, who can have recourse to blows; but those who can indulge in a churlishness of behaviour, a sharpness of language, an unkindness of looks, would do well to consider how far they are complying with the divine command, 'Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.'

The honour of ATTENTION. Nothing is so intolerable to a female as neglect; and upon

what principle can a man justify indifference, omissions of observance, and heedless manners towards a WIFE? Has he not chosen her? Has he not declared his preference? Are not the vows of God upon him? Is she not the chief relation he possesses on earth?

The honour of CONFIDENCE. You are not to proceed without their knowledge and advice. In many cases their opinion may be preferable to your own. Their judgment may be less clouded by interest: they stand back from the object, you are too near; they are cool and calm, you, by being in the scene, are ruffled, and inflamed. An eminent minister of the gospel has published to the world, 'That he had never in any particular business acted contrary to the suggestions of his wife, without having reason afterwards to repent of it.' I believe there are many who are restrained from similar acknowledgments only by a want of candor. Some husbands never consult their wives; or even deign to inform them: and their wives have often to learn from others, or from events, things in which perhaps they are most deeply concerned.

The honour of MAINTENANCE. You are to provide for them, and enable them to appear becoming their rank and situation in life. What can we think of the man who squanders away his substance upon his lewd or his drunken appetites, reduces his wife to a drudge, and suffers her with her babes to struggle with the hardships of penury, unable to procure a sufficiency of food, or raiment? 'If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.'

The honour of BENEVOLENCE. You are to enable her to do good. Every man should devote a proportion of his property to charitable uses, and he should not by his distribution of the whole, draw towards himself all the regards of the relieved and obliged. His wife should command a share of the means and of the honour. Husbands! give your wives those proofs of regard which reason and revelation demand for them, and we shall soon hear less of your reflections and complaints.

Observe, 2dly, the motives by which this duty is enforced. They are three.

The first is taken from the natural condition of the sex. 'SHE IS THE WEAKER VESSEL.' If this be mentioned as a reason to excite a becoming behaviour towards the wife, there can be nothing in the expression degrading, nothing that tends to diminish the honour we are bound to show them, nothing that is not adapted, when properly considered, to promote it. No invidious comparisons are here justified between the powers of the mind. Whether there would be any disparity, were females placed in the same circumstances, indulged with the same advantages, and allowed to feel the same motives with their brethren, it would be needless to determine. They have taken good care often to prove, that the difference is not so vast as some male monopolists are willing to suppose. The reference is obvious and striking. Nature is always wise. It gives more strength where it is necessary, and less, where other qualities supersede it. Milton has finely expressed the difference in the original pair:

> 'For contemplation he and valour form'd,
> For softness she and sweet attractive grace,'

Her bodily strength is inferior, her constitution less firm and vigorous, her frame more tender, her temper more yielding, her circumstances more generally depressing. A rose, a lily, allows of no rough usages. Tenderness demands gentleness: delicacy, care: pliancy, props. Has a condition fewer resources, and is there much in it of the afflictive and humbling? The more does it need succour, and the more necessary is every assistance to maintain and increase the consequence of it, especially where so much depends upon the respectability of the character who fills it. Where is the man who is not alive to this consideration? Where is the husband, who, reflecting on her peculiar circumstances, would not be disposed by every possible means to promote the dignity, and the satisfaction of a wife? What is the language of these circumstances? 'Honour us; deal kindly with us. From many of the opportunities, and means by which you procure favourable notice, we are excluded. Doomed to the shades, few of the high places of the earth are open to us. Alternately we are adored, and oppressed. From our slaves, you

become our tyrants. You feel our beauty, and avail yourselves of our weakness. You complain of our inferiority, but none of your behaviour bids us rise. Sensibility has given us a thousand feelings, which nature has kindly denied you. Always under restraints, we have little liberty of choice. Providence seems to have been more attentive to enable us to confer happiness, than to enjoy it. Every condition has for us fresh mortifications; every relation, new sorrows. We enter social bonds; it is a system of perpetual sacrifice. We cannot give life to others, without hazarding our own. We have sufferings which you do not share, cannot share. If spared, years, and decays invade our charms, and much of the ardour produced by attraction departs with it. We may die. The grave covers us, and we are soon forgotten: soon are the days of your mourning ended, soon is our loss repaired; dismissed even from your speech, our name is to be heard no more; a successor may dislike it. Our children, after having a mother by nature, may fall under the control of a mother by affinity, and be mortified by distinctions

made between them, and her *own* offspring. Though the duties which we have discharged invariably, be the most important and necessary, they do not shine : they are too common to strike : they procure no celebrity : the wife, the mother, fills no historic page. Our privations, our confinements, our wearisome days, our interrupted, our sleepless nights, the hours we have hung in anxious watchings over your sick and dying offspring.'

Behold a second motive. It is derived from the dignity of the wife as a mutual partaker of the privileges of the gospel. No inequality reigns here. It is a 'common salvation.' Are you, O man, an 'HEIR of the GRACE OF LIFE?' So are they ; heirs TOGETHER WITH YOU, in the same degree, having the same claims, the same hopes, the same reversions. 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female ; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.' Can a woman be an infidel? What self-degradation! Need she be told HER obligations to Christianity? What has raised her so high in the scale of importance? What system has done such

justice to her claims? In what country have the provisions of legislation lost sight of the distinction of male and female; looked at both with the same aspect, rendered the one as personally responsible as the other, and entitled them equally to the same rights and privileges? When a woman steps on this sacred ground, she becomes free; she is her own; she is a party, she treats for herself. Here, my sisters, your reproach is rolled away. We see one of your sex bringing forth 'IMMANUEL, God with us.' We see the angels of heaven bringing you messages, and performing for you miracles. We see you last at the cross, and first at the tomb of our common Lord. We see JEHOVAH listening to your supplications, and maintaining your cause. We see you 'the DAUGHTERS of the Lord Almighty.' We see you redeemed with an infinite price, destined to possess a 'far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,' and hastening to partake of a resurrection in which they 'neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.'

A third reason is drawn from those devo-

tional exercises which cannot be properly performed where relative duty is not observed: 'That your PRAYERS be not hindered.' It is impossible for a Christian to live without prayer. He prays alone, and he prays with others. The field, the temple, the closet, the family, are with him places 'where prayer is wont to be made.'

How necessary is prayer in the marriage state! How does social devotion sweeten social life! It obtains strength for its duties, and succour for its trials. It gives a direction to the mind, by which we escape numberless snares; an elevation, by which we rise above a thousand vexations. How it sanctifies our comforts! How it prepares the soul for disappointment or success! How it calls down the blessing of Heaven to 'attend the labour of our hand!' How it attracts the divine presence, and places Him within our reach 'who is nigh unto all them that call upon him; to all that call upon him in truth.' Of a prayerful habitation it may be said, How glorious is this place! 'This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!' 'The voice of rejoicing and of salvation is in

the tabernacles of the righteous.' O happy mansion! where all the members of the family 'dwell together in unity;' living with each other here, as those who expect to be associates forever; maintaining a friendship, the centre of which is religion, the duration of which is eternity, the bonds of which are 'faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.'

Guard, therefore, against every thing injurious to the service of God in your families. Let nothing hinder its exercise. Let nothing prevent its fervour. Let nothing destroy its freedom. Let nothing frustrate its efficacy. Let nothing limit, or even delay its success. Let your whole conversation be consistent with devotion, or preparatory to it. Avoid whatever renders an introduction into the Divine presence less easy, or less delightful. Keep open a passage wide enough to advance together to the throne of grace. Go hand in hand into his presence: 'Agree, touching the things you shall ask, and it shall be done for you of our heavenly Father.'

In reviewing the subject, I would beseech you, my dear hearers, to remember, That

those who make light of moral and relative duties, contemn the will of God. 'He knows what is in man,' and what is necessary to him. Every condition lies open to his view. He sees how things blend, and how they issue; how they oppose, or how they aid each other. Though invisible to us, he sees the worm that lies at the root of our social happiness: we wonder at the effect, he sees the cause, and would remove it. He has condescended to speak: we have HIS judgment relative to every station and relation in life. He speaks as a sovereign who has authority to command, and he speaks as a friend who consults your welfare, and 'takes pleasure in the prosperity of his servants.'

Again. We have reason to lament, that there is such a general deficiency among professors of religion, with regard to those duties which they owe to each other. Many, to show their love to the gospel, testify their indifference to the law. Numbers are too orthodox, or too devotional, to be moral. Morality is below their faith, or their raptures. Various things their system has taught them; but one

thing it has not taught them, one thing it does not require them to learn—'to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world.' Shall ministers, by their silence, be accessary to this corruption of manners, this awful perversion of religion? Let them 'affirm, constantly, that they which have believed in God must be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.'

Let those who stand already in the marriage relation, be willing to know, and to practise the duties which spring from it. Enter, my brethren and sisters, the temple of revelation; bow before the divine oracle; say, 'Lord, what wilt thou have ME to do.' 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.' Extract from the scripture, the mind of God concerning yourselves individually. Take home the words I have been explaining. Read, compare, resolve, reform. Let not husbands take away the duties of the wife, nor wives the duties of the husband; but let both take respectively their own, and say, 'O that my feet were directed to keep thy statutes.' 'I have chosen

the way of truth, thy judgments have I laid before me.' 'Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way.' 'I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.'

Let the young think of this, and let it influence their choice. Let those think of it, who are approaching this holy state. By many it is totally overlooked; and they contract marriages on considerations purely accidental, or worldly; as if they wished to marry, not to be happy; to gain each other, not to enjoy. Who forms this alliance as a Christian? Who enters it with those views and motives the gospel supplies? Who consults God in the undertaking? Who has the banns published in heaven to ascertain what impediments are pleaded there? Thus persons are often unsuitably bound together by an engagement, which can only be dissolved by death, that comes to release them from one prison, and conduct them into another.

But may I not congratulate others? My beloved friends, in this important concern, YOU have done nothing without asking counsel of

the Lord. By faith and prayer, I am persuaded you have engaged that Saviour who was present at the marriage of Cana in Galilee, to honour your approaching nuptials; and under the influence of his gracious Spirit, your mutual affections shall increase with time, and shine bright to all eternity. I look forward and see you blessing and blessed. I see you 'walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.' I see your 'children like olive-plants around your table.' I see you endeavouring to form them into characters, and to 'train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' I see you resigning each other with the feelings and hopes of Christians. 'For this I say, the time is short: It remaineth, therefore, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away;' and you are hastening from the altar to the tomb.

THE

WIFE'S ADVOCATE:

A DISCOURSE,

PREACHED

ON A MARRIAGE OCCASION.

'Husbands, love your Wives, and be not bitter against them.'

'Husbands, love your Wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it.'—*Paul.*

'*True* greatness is always tender and sympathising.'—*Lavater.*

PREFACE.

When the Author, if he may be excused a reference to himself, quite a youth, first went to London, and was all anxiety to hear the preachers of the famed metropolis, he was told by a friend, if he wished to hear a good doctrinal sermon, he must hear ——; if an experimental, he must hear ——; and if a practical, he must hear ——. And he well remembers simply asking, 'But is there no minister here who preaches all these? I should rather hear him.

This mode, he is conscious, he has always aimed and endeavoured to follow himself: and by this criterion he is willing to be judged, not indeed by an occasional hearer, but by his regular and constant attendants. The following discourse, therefore, is not to be taken as a *specimen* of his preaching, but as a *part;* the propriety and usefulness of which, are to be viewed in alliance with other parts, and in harmony with the whole.

A minister, who, like Epaphras, would 'stand perfect and complete in all the will of God,' *must* inculcate the relative duties.

And he will find his advantage in enforcing them connectedly. Each party will the better receive — especially admonition and reproof; when the corresponding party is addressed at the same time, and in the same manner: because it will show that the preacher has no private aim; and is no respecter of persons.

The apostles invariably adopted this method. If they addressed servants, they always addressed masters. If they exhorted children, they always exhorted parents also. It was the same with regard to the conjugal relations.

Bath, December 1, 1829.

DISCOURSE.

Malachi ii. 13—15.

And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good-will at your hand. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

It has been the lot of some very good men, to live in very bad times. And this was the case with Malachi. Even *then*, indeed, some were found, 'who feared the Lord, and thought upon his name.' And they were graciously noticed and distinguished by him: 'They shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I shall make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.'

These, however, were only so many exceptions from the multitude; and resembled a few small luminaries, that serve to render the darkness between, the more palpable. According to the language of our prophet, the degeneracy was complete. From the crown of the head to the soul of the foot, there was no soundness. The young and the old; the rich and the poor; rulers and subjects; priests and people, were all deeply revolted from God.

In such a corrupt state of society, the office of a minister is not a very enviable, or easy one. It is trying to censure and condemn; and he that is not faithful to his conscience and commission, will fail under the trial, and prophesy smooth things, because the multitude love to have it so. But the man of God, raised above the love of fame, and the dread of frowns, will not shun 'to declare *all* the counsel of God,' 'warning *every* man, and teaching *every* man in all wisdom, that he may present every man *perfect* in Christ Jesus.'

The connexions of life, the sources of so much virtue and sin, happiness and misery; are numerous and various; and when properly

estimated, they are not to be judged of by their publicity, and elevation, and splendor; but by the constancy of their influence, the extent of their operation, and the importance of their effects. The most ordinary relations, therefore, are the most fundamental. These are the DOMESTIC. Communities originate from families; and depend upon them: and the quality of the one must partake largely of the attributes of the other. In religious concerns, it is not too much to say, with Philip Henry, that 'a man is really what he is relatively.' We are aware that there is much of instinct in the relative affections; and that they do not strike far into moral character. The existence of them alone, is not a sufficient proof of piety. But it is otherwise with the *absence* of them. This is decisive evidence *against* a person. If he is bad at home, he is bad every where. If he is a bad father, and a bad husband, he *cannot* be a good man. And, therefore, when a very eminent minister was asked whether he thought a certain individual was truly pious, he replied, 'I cannot tell—I never lived with him.'

Hence a preacher that would make full proof of his ministry, must enter the scenery of families, and inquire how matters stand between masters and servants; parents and children; wives and husbands.

And it is here, we find Malachi. He is dealing with the latter relationship; and he speaks boldly as he ought to speak: 'And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good-will at your hand. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.'

Let us attend to four articles.

THE SUBJECT OF COMPLAINT.

THE AGGRAVATION OF THE OFFENCE.

THE CONDEMNATION OF THE TRANSGRESSOR.

THE MEANS OF PREVENTION.

I. THE SUBJECT OF COMPLAINT. The charge is against unkind husbands; and consists in this—That they embittered the lives of those they ought to have loved and cherished; so that they caused them, when they approached the sanctuary of God, instead of rejoicing before him, as his service required, to break forth into the most passionate expressions of grief. 'This have ye done, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out.'

Who does not here call to mind the history of Hannah? 'And as she went to the house of the Lord, so her adversary provoked her much, for to make her fret, because the Lord had shut up her womb. Therefore she wept and did not eat—and she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore.' But you say, 'This was not occasioned by Elkanah. He was an attached and an attentive husband.' It is true, it was not occa-

sioned by him *immediately;* but it was so *really*. Had Hannah been, as she ought to have been, his only wife, the distress would have been prevented; and she would not have found herself in alliance with a fellow-wife, that delighted to insult and aggravate her disappointment.

And you will observe, that this was one of the ways, in which the husbands, here complained of, converted the very devotion of their wives into mourning, and made the altar of God, not a place of gladness and praise, but of refuge and appeal. They added to their number; and thus vexed and degraded their wives, by reducing them from peace to a state of contention; from supremacy to jealousy and rivalship; from being the sole objects of attraction, to share divided, diminished, precarious regards.

Though polygamy had been long practised, it was never justified. The very tolerance of it, in every instance, showed most clearly and strongly by the effects, that it was a deviation from rectitude. That which is irreconcilable to the welfare of domestic life, could never

obtain the *approbation* of Him who ordained that state, not only for the purpose of purity, but of peace and happiness. The evils arising from the usage itself, therefore, had so far checked it, that in Judea, at the time of our Saviour, we meet with no instances of it. It was also forbidden among the Greeks and Romans. And this accounts, as Paley observes, for our finding no particular enactment against it in the New Testament; but it *is* said, 'To avoid fornication, let every man have his *own wife*—not wives; and let every wife have her *own husband*.'

The pleasure of God also appears in proportioning the actual number of males and females. There is, indeed, some little inequality in the births of these; but the fact strengthens the reasoning. If there are born more males than females, by one in nineteen, the level is restored by the superior casualties to which the male sex is exposed; and the balance remaining, allows but one woman to one man. And what can show the will of God more decisively than his conduct? If we go back to the beginning of the world, no con-

ceivable reason can be given, why, if polygamy was to be continued to the human race, it should not have commenced with it. But hear our prophet: 'And did not he make one?' One Eve for one Adam? Adam even in Paradise had one wife only. This oneness, therefore, could not have been deemed a confinement, but a regulation becoming the most perfect state. 'Yet had he the residue of the Spirit;' and *could* therefore have made another partner as fair and lovely as Eve herself was. 'And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed.' And where is such a pious offspring likely to be found? Can children be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, in the presence of the lawlessness of one sex, and the debasement of the other? In the residence of oppression, sensuality, passion, artifice, hypocrisies? In the midst of divided and opposing interests, dissensions, swellings, tumults? 'Where envy and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.'

But another of the evils here reprobated, was the putting away their wives when they chose to dislike them. Unless in one case,

conceded by reason and revelation, the marriage relation is indissoluble. Hence, says our Saviour, in answer to the question of the Pharisees, 'Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for *every* cause? Have ye not read, that He who made them at the beginning, made them male and female; and said, For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh? What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.' Upon which they said unto him, 'Why then did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?' He said unto them, 'Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her which is put away, doth commit adultery.'

This exception being made, 'The Lord God of Israel saith, that he hateth putting away.' Cases of hardship bearing peculiarly

on individuals, will doubtless now and then occur; but such occasional evils are more than compensated by the advantages of the limitation. For we should consider what would be, not the personal and immediate, but the general and the ultimate tendency and effects of larger permission. Whatever other reasons for divorce were allowed, many would be sure to live up to them; and licentiousness would soon also acquire yet more allowance. This was seen in France. When, after the Revolution, husbands were permitted to put away their wives for unsuitableness of temper, mutual dislike, perverseness, and other things; bad men availed themselves of every excuse to disengage themselves from restraint; and dissoluteness and misery spread among thousands, who would otherwise have been satisfied with their condition. For people soon acquiesce in what they know to be unalterable; and their destiny, by habit, is easily moulded into choice. They who are conscious that they cannot separate, will feel that it is their mutual interest to forbear, to give up, and to accommodate. To which we may add, that when

a connexion is formed for life, much more prudence and care are likely to be exercised in forming it, than if it were terminable at pleasure.

We cannot be censured for these remarks. Not only has our subject brought them before us; but they are very worthy of our attention; and we cannot help observing, that the exclusion of polygamy and the prohibition of divorce, confining marriage to one pair, and rendering the union indissoluble, have done more to promote and secure the morals and welfare of the community, than all the institutions, the wisdom and goodness of legislators have ever established. Nor can we be sufficiently thankful, that in these important concerns, the laws of our country fall in with the authority of God.

But though, in this highly favoured land, neither of these modes of domestic persecution is open to a husband; there are many other ways in which he may 'cover the altar of the Lord with tears, and with weeping, and crying out.'

He cannot safely take to himself more wives than one. But to that one he may prove

unfaithful; and basely transfer to another, the affection alone due to herself.

He cannot legally put away his wife. But by oppressive and cruel, degrading and insulting conduct, he may force her to withdraw; and then falsely plead and use the refusal to live with him, which he himself designedly produced.

I know not how to refer to bodily violence. 'No *man* ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it.' But is there a brute in human shape? Is there a wretch, miscalled a husband, who is not ashamed to execute what the preacher is ashamed even to intimate?

But every depth of disgrace, every exertion of cruelty, is not necessary to break a tender heart, or to crush a delicate spirit. He may accomplish his work by studied neglect; by churlish manners; by unkind language; by alienated or angry looks. A contemptuous sneer will strike a death-chill into every feeling. A bitter irony will sting like a scorpion, and leave the deadly rankling behind.

He may reduce her to the mortification of

seeing him restless at home ; always anxious to contrive or excuse absence, instead of dwelling with her according to knowledge ; and fonder of any company than the society of his wife.

He may deprive her of her needful support and comfort. And though she would patiently and cheerfully share in the privations and distress brought on them by the providence of God, she cannot but feel grievously the trial of hardships and straits arising solely from idleness, or drunkenness, or gaming, or licentiousness.

He may wound her, by withholding from her the confidence required by the mutuality and unity of the relation—a relation that allows nothing to be concealed ; nothing to be found out by search or accident. Yet it is not a very uncommon trial for a wife, unapprised, unprepared, to be plunged from genteel life into destitution and wo ; while she has been censured for living in a style she would have been the first to have reduced, had she divined the event that rendered it a duty.

We cannot do justice to this part of our subject. The causes of complaint are numberless. But we must not avoid adding—

That relative trials are often more painful than personal ones. That in the case before us, the anguish is enhanced by the nearness and importance of the quarter from which it comes; and that it is frequently increased by secrecy and suppression, the sufferer being denied the relief of pouring her sorrow even perhaps into the ear of friendship. The heart knows the bitterness. The groanings cannot be uttered. But let us pass from the complaint to

II. THE AGGRAVATION OF THE OFFENCE. It is taken from the character of the aggrieved.

First: 'She is the wife of thy *youth*.' The exemplification is derived from an early marriage: and the reference is a countenance of the usage. Men may marry when they please; but, in order to illustrate the force of this relation, the scripture does not notice confederacies of profit; bargains of conveniency; provisions of nursery-hood for infirmity, and sickness, and death;—the only connexion to which God in his word ever alludes, and from which he reasons, is 'the wife of youth.'

To such an object there will belong a pecu-

liar affection. It is the first attachment; fresh, simple, and undebased. The feelings strike deeper, and root firmer, owing to earlier implantation and longer growth. The conformity between the parties is more full and perfect; as they assimilate into the qualities of each other more easily while soft and pliant, than after years and habitudes have confirmed them, and rendered all change impossible, or difficult and irksome.

About what other object, when taken away, will a man's memory linger so long and tenaciously, as the image of the wife of his youth? Of *her* who first drew into one mighty and exquisite feeling all the sympathies of his heart? Of *her* with whom he passed the delicious season of virtuous courtship? Of *her* who inspired him with all the liveliness and enjoyment of hope? Of *her* who first made him sensible of the endearments of domestic bliss? Of *her* who first, by the cry and the image of innocent helplessness, told him the tenderness of the parental relation? Of *her* on whose knee his child first clasped his little hands to pray? Of *her* whose leaning so often pressed his arm, in

his way to the house of God, in the walks of rural excursion, and the journey of life?

And canst thou, O man, overlook all this while she is living? What if the charm that lighted up the blaze of attachment be now fading? The rose could not always bloom: but surely the fragrance remains. What if infirmities more suddenly or slowly begin to appear: now is the time for evincing and displaying a more grateful and unselfish affection. Is the worth of years to be forgotten? Has she not been always thy ministering spirit? Has not thy happiness been dearer to her than her own? In all thy afflictions, has she not been afflicted? Perhaps in giving life, or watching over the pain and malady of thy offspring, she has impaired her frame, and health is only now a living sacrifice. Go and make God thine example: 'I remember Thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.'

Secondly, says the prophet, 'Is she not thy *companion?*' This, perhaps, is the most lovely and becoming idea of the relation that

can be supplied. She is not, O man, thy superior: she is not thy slave, thy servant, thy dependent. She is indeed a help-mate; so art thou—but she is thy companion.'

Yet, as a companion, she is very distinguishable from every other. A brother or sister is a companion; but they are so involuntarily—she is thy companion by choice. Many are companions for a while; but they are separable from us, and our intercourse may be reduced to correspondence—she is thy companion for life. Let other companions be ever so intimate, they have yet their separate allotments—she is thy companion, so as to have no interests of her own, but is an equal sharer in all the cares and comforts of thine.

It will be confessed, that there are some differences between the male and the female character, produced by nature, and enlarged by education. But the very differences render them the more mutually eligible as companions. The defective qualities of each are provided for in the attributes of the other. Both excel; but they excel in their own way. *He* is more characterized by thought; *she*, by

sympathy: but these properties demand and aid each other. The eagerness, the sensitiveness, the delicacy, the genius, of the female, would unnerve the man: and the courage, the inflexibility, the severeness of the man, would unsex the female. Nothing can be more absurd than to oppose their respective claims; nothing more injurious than to separate them. Let their peculiar properties and places be retained, and all will be found adaptation and order. Let them be associated, and all will be found harmony and completeness.

But how is it to be lamented when their companionship is not carried into the widest, noblest, and most important region of its exercise—I mean religion! How unmeet is it, while one goes into the presence of God by devotion, for the other to stand without, till this transaction be over! How forceless the petition singly signed, while the voice of love and union cries, 'If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing they may ask, it shall be done of my heavenly Father!' How strange and unsightly must it be for one of these associates to be walking the way ever-

lasting, while the other is going the road to death! How hurtful and fatal to divide and separate, where, weak and opposed alone, they need every mutual encouragement and assistance! How appalling to reflect, that the most endearing alliance must be broken up forever at the termination of a life equally short and uncertain!

Husbands and wives! never forget that you are moral and accountable beings; and that the present life is only the threshold of existence. Be companions in faith and godliness. Walk together as heirs of the grace of life. Take sweet counsel together, and go to the house of God in company. Allure each other over the land of revelation in the length and breadth thereof. Mutually survey its prospects, admire its beauties, and gather of its flowers and fruits. Encourage one another with these words; and let your hearts be comforted and knit together in love unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Then

your children will not be perplexed by contrary counsels and examples. Then you will be lovely in life, and in death not divided. Then your separation will be only temporary; a time of re-union will come; and the intercourse of pure and perfected friendship will be renewed forever.

Thirdly: 'She is the wife of thy *covenant*.' Covenant here means the marriage contract; and by the mention of this, the husband is called upon to remember that the vows of God are upon him. A truly virtuous man will feel love more binding than law; yet considering human frailty, and the interests of society, it is well to be bound by duty as well as affection: and be constrained, if we act wrong, not only to violate principle, but obligation. The forms and rites of the connubial engagement may vary in different ages and countries; but some sanction has been always required. If the contract be not directly a religious transaction, it has generally been accompanied and enforced by religious sanctions. And surely such a connexion can never be rendered too solemn and too sacred. It is the most awful and in-

teresting compact into which it is possible to enter. Yet there are men who can trifle with a stipulation so momentous; and seem to forget all the responsibilities it entails: requiring perhaps at the same time exact fidelity on the other side—as if, in a covenant, both the parties were not equally bound. Did these men, beforehand, tell the persons they are endeavouring to espouse, how they designed to treat them; or did they refuse to pledge themselves to any kind of agreeable and good behaviour towards them; they would act an open part at least; and their wives, though chargeable with folly in venturing to advance, would yet have no deceitfulness to complain of. But when a man has voluntarily promised and bound himself by oath, he is no longer at liberty to behave otherwise than his engagement prescribes, without falsehood, perfidy, perjury, and disgrace.

He that does not verify the engagement, not only implied but expressed, upon which alone the heart was surrendered to him, is no better than a seducer. He falsely wins confidence, basely to betray it; and proclaims him-

self not only to be destitute of the principles of a Christian, but the honour of a man: and for want of common honesty, he ought to be shunned by all reputable society. Herod, though he was grieved at his promise, yet would not refuse to ratify it, for his oath's sake. Jephthah, though he had to sacrifice his own daughter, yet, said he, 'I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.' 'A good man sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.' And we know who has said, 'When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools. Pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thy hands?' Therefore let us consider

III. THE CONDEMNATION OF THE TRANSGRESSOR. Here we have both the sentence and the evidence upon which it is adjudged.

The first is thus expressed: 'Insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with with good-will at your hand.' And is this a light thing? God is the supreme good. In His favour is life. It is the most delightful consciousness in the world to know that we are accepted of him; and to have the testimony that we please God. But all here is aversion, rejection, contempt. 'I will have no communion with you. I hate not only your sins, but your services.'

It would seem surprising, indeed, that those who live in disobedience to his commands, should yet be found attending the worship of God at all: for there is much in the Dutch proverb, 'Praying will make a man leave off sinning, or sinning will make a man leave off praying.' But the heart is deceitful above all things, as well as desperately wicked: and the inconsistencies it is continually putting forth, are as wonderful as in things in the course of nature or order of providence. There are those who will observe the form of godliness, and deny the power of it. There are those who will support the cause of Christ and

defraud their tradesmen: who will regard the positive ordinances of religion; and neglect its moral requisitions: who will value the ritual part of devotion, and violate the practical. How many are godly on the Sabbath, and worldly all the week! Who appear saints in the house of God, and are demons in their own! Are there not some who even maintain morning and evening service in their families, and yet cover the altar of the Lord with tears, and with weeping, and crying out?

But let such know that omission is preferable to perversion. And let them 'go and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice.' 'God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.' 'He that stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, and shall not be heard.' Hence the God of Israel saith, 'He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man: he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck: he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood: he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol.' Wherefore? Were not

these observances of His own appointment? They were. But He loathed them when they became substitutes for moral principle, or connected with practices which he had condemned. Therefore, says he, 'Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Seek justice; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow. Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'

Is this a light thing? More is implied than is expressed. There is no medium between non-acceptance with God, and condemnation. If we are not in his favour, we are under his wrath. And who can stand before *Him* when once *He* is angry? The grand question is, In what relation are we found to *Him?* Is *He* our friend or our foe? If our foe, he can arm all creatures against us: he can operate immediately upon our mind: he can pursue us beyond the grave, which screens us from all other enemies; and, after he hath killed, can cast into hell. He that judgeth us is

the Lord. And if He be for us, who can be against us? He can make all things work together for our good. They whom he blesses are blessed: and they whom he curses are cursed: and none can reverse it.

And is this a light thing? Wisdom cries, Hide not thy face from me: put not thy servant away in anger. There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me. And, to heal this broken heart; to soothe every sorrow; to sweeten every comfort; to raise me above the fear of every evil; say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.

But, secondly, who are these? In order to punish legally, there must be not only guilt, but conviction; and there is no conviction without evidence, without witness. Who is the witness here? God himself. 'The Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously, though she is thy companion and the wife of thy covenant.' This indeed is a case in which human witness is not, and cannot be always attainable. A few transgres-

sors may be careless of observation, and, in their shame, seek no disguise: but in general, the offender courts secrecy. He knows his reputation is at stake; and that nothing lowers a man more in common estimation than improper temper and conduct towards the most claimful of all relations. He therefore tries as much as possible to cloak it. Before others, he is often full of pretensions. He uses, perhaps, the most endearing expressions; and while the sufferer is conscious of the falseness of all this display, he passes for a respectable, perhaps a fond husband. But not with Him whose eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. *He* sets his secret sins in the light of his countenance.

It would be well for us always to remember that God sees us; and the less we are under the cognizance of others, the more, in a way of motive and influence, we need to realize the inspection of our witness in heaven and our record on high. In the world and in the church we are more upon our guard, because there are many to observe us; but in our dwellings we give ourselves more latitudes.

But God is there; and therefore we should walk within our house with a perfect heart, and set no wicked thing before our eyes, and hate the work of them that turn aside. He knoweth our down-sitting, and our up-rising. He compasseth about our path; and is acquainted with all our ways. He is a witness between us and our servants; a witness between us and our children; a witness between us and our wives; a constant witness; an unerring witness; a witness who is at the same time the lawgiver whose orders we contemn; and the judge who will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

What mysteries of iniquity will that day make manifest! How many tyrants have despatched their victims in dungeons, or by assassins whose employers were never known! How many seducers have entangled and ruined the innocent and unwary, the discovery of whom was suppressed by power or bribery! How many husbands have destroyed the peace, the comfort, the health, the life of those who ought to have been dear to them as their own

souls, uncensured, and even unsuspected! But the Lord comes, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart. Yet in wrath he remembers mercy; and before he destroys, he warns and admonishes. Hence,

IV. THE MEANS OF PREVENTION. 'Therefore *take heed to your spirit*, and let *none* deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.'

Here we are led immediately to the source of all evil. 'Take heed to your *spirit*.' There all begins: and there is no sanctifying the life without an attention to the heart. Therefore says Solomon, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.' Heal the spring, and the streams will be wholesome. Make the tree good, and the fruit will be good. Renew the heart, and upon the tongue is the law of kindness. Replenish the heart, and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. 'A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things.'

But the meaning is, not only that we should attend to our principles if we would regulate our practice, but that we should never overlook or neglect the very first risings of evil. Evil is spreading like leaven, and a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. It may be too late to assail the enemy when he has advanced and gathered force from success. Attack him at the outset, while yet his strength is small; and no strong-hold is taken; and no pass is even seized. When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Crush, therefore, the cocatrice in the egg, lest it break forth, and become a fiery flying serpent.

Again. *All* are concerned in this caution; and 'let *none* deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.'

Are Levites excepted? They are chiefly the persons here complained of. Their lips are indeed to keep knowledge; but they are to *do*, as well as to *teach*. They are to be examples, to illustrate and recommend their own doctrine. The snuffers in the tabernacle were to be made of pure gold. They who

reprove others are to be blameless themselves. Their exhortations, dishonoured by their own temper and practice, will not only be unavailing, but repulsive ; and all the convictions *they* would fix in the conscience, will drop like arrows from an impenetrable shield. 'Behold, thou knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law ; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructer of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou, therefore, which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal ? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery ? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege ? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God ?' Who revolts not at receiving his food from a leprous hand ? If the bad husband disgraces the good preacher, men will abhor the offering of the Lord.

Are the upper ranks above this injunction ?

It might be supposed that they had this imagination, from their conduct in too many instances. But the higher the individual, the more is he bound to regard it. He is by his station the more observable and influential; and the more injurious will his life prove, if it be vicious. Evil is a stream; and, like every other stream, it does not ascend but runs downward. Or, to borrow another image, a private person is like a pocket watch, that only misinforms the wearer: a public character is like a town clock, that leads astray the whole parish.

Yet *no* man is entirely unobserved and uninfluential, especially when placed at the head of a family. Therefore let the low as well as the high remember the advice. Indeed, the less of outward prosperity persons have, the more necessary is it to guard against those tempers and practices that will embitter their trials; and to seek solace, under their privations, in the grace of the gospel, the consolations of religion, and the comforts of domestic peace and love. And execrated be the sentiment, that love and poverty are incompatible. There may be more of contentment, though

less of mirth ; more of the reality, though less of the show of happiness, in the cottage than in the mansion. Where the Lord is sought, he blesses their bread and their water. When in the simplicity of faith the scriptures are read with prayer, and praise, these are found to be better than thousands of gold and silver.

Is this idle talk ? Here is the language of inspiration : 'Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox, and hatred therewith. Better is a little with quietness, than a house full of sacrifices with strife.' 'A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked.' What heart-cold wretchedness is often found connected with splendor, abundance, and excess : 'The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.'

Let the advancing in life guard against the loss of their first regards. The effervescence of the passion may subside, but let the spirit of the principle be preserved ; and, like generous wines, it will refine and improve by keeping.

And let not the young be careless. The

newly-married pair, happy in the possession of crowned desires, may think themselves in no danger of abated regard: but we have seen goodness, even in wedded life, like the morning cloud and early dew that passeth away. Therefore take heed to *your* spirit. Watch, not only against the grosser evils, but minor delinquencies. Guard against the first symptom of declension. One thing prepares for, brings in, justifies another; and, when going astray, the smallness of each movement may keep us unalarmed, till we look back, and are shocked at the distance we have reached. Let your wife have no reason for the most *distant* apprehension. Let no sigh flit across her mind. Be not satisfied to keep within the bare precincts of duty; but care for the things of the wife, how you may please the wife. Be open, be candid, be tender, be attentive, be exemplary. In the connexion before us, inattention leads to indifference; and indifference to dislike; and dislike to disgust. If love be withdrawn, wedded life is confinement, misery, hell. Let love abound, and no ennui is known; no restraint is felt; no task is per-

formed. The yoke is easy; the burden is light. Duty is privilege; and to oblige, is more delightful than to be obliged. But remember, religion is the *best* promoter and preserver of this love; and therefore let *domestic morality* be founded in *Christian piety.*

'But why have you chosen such a passage as this?' Go and ask Malachi, why he inserted it in his short series of prophesyings? Go and ask Paul, whether 'all scripture is not given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness?' Does not the unspeakable importance of the subject justify the selection? Does not the character of the day in which we live, render such a discourse needful?

But I have availed myself of a particular event to bring forward these thoughts this morning. It is the union of —— with ——.

He will have too much good sense to take improperly the drift of the subject; or to suppose that caution and admonition necessarily imply censure or suspicion. No, my young friend; I am fully persuaded better things of

you, though I thus speak; and believe that you will regard HER, whose heart has safely trusted in you as your companion, the wife of your youth and of your covenant; and continue to love and to cherish till the parting hour. I hail you on the completion of your wishes: 'He that findeth a wife, findeth a good thing, and obtains favour of the Lord.' I would not interrupt the joy of your espousals; but surely it cannot be unreasonable to say to the favoured sons of men, 'Rejoice with trembling.' The connexion you have formed is frail. It has its duties as well as its delights. It has also its cares as well as its comforts. Look not for a state of unalloyed happiness. Expect not to find the perfection in another, which you know another will never find in you. I commend you to God and to the word of his grace: and may He whom you have honoured in believing his truth, that 'it is not good for man to be alone,' look down from heaven, and say, 'From this day will I bless you.'

But I turn to you, my *female* friends, and as far as I know my own convictions and feelings, I *am* your friend; you will therefore

allow me to address you freely, especially since I have delivered myself unsparingly to those of my own sex.

First, let me address those who are yet unconnected. It is not improper for you to think of a condition which Nature has ordained us for; and which the scripture pronounces honourable in all. Nor should you revolt from the state because there are husbands who 'cover the altar of God with tears.' All men are not liars. Nor should difficulties discourage you. These are found in every condition: and we are persuaded that the state, if properly entered, is the most happy in this vale of tears. How much of the relish of our comforts is lost in unsocial enjoyment! How much do we need a friend, another self, to alleviate by sharing the cares and griefs of life! How many moments of languor, oppressiveness, and despondency are there, in which the heart beats for attention, sympathy, and kindness! How helpless is a solitary female! how many real dangers surround her; and how are these perils multiplied by solitariness! A single man has a thousand engagements abroad: a

woman, if single, has little diversion from thought, and broods over real and imaginary evils. And how inferior is she reckoned to the female who sustains the character of a wife, and a parent, and is performing her duty to the world, and is the source of usefulness to the community!

But there is nothing *reproachful* in your present condition, unless you choose to make it so by exemplifying in your temper and conduct the imputations thrown on your state, especially in its advancement. Show that it does not necessarily entail malevolence, envy, scandal, curiosity, spleen, insipid formality, prudery, secrecy, a mystifying of trifles. The character and lives of too many of *our* sex are such as must prevent any reflection upon you for declining *them:* and your scorning to espouse worthlessness for the sake of any advantage; and your refusing every connexion unapproved by your principles and conscience, as well as affection; will raise you in the estimation of all the wise and good.

Never, therefore, settle it in your minds that you *must* enter this state; or that marriage is

essential to your usefulness, respectability, and happiness. Refer it to Him who has a right to dispose of us as he pleases; and who knows what is best for us. And in the mean time improve the *advantages* of your present state. You are free from a thousand anxiousnesses and trials, unfriendly to mental culture and enlarged devotion. 'She that is unmarried careth for the things of the Lord, how she may be holy both in body and spirit. But she that is married, careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.' If you have met with disappointment, let these reflections prevent dissatisfaction; and sober your hopes; and make you, when you think of altering your circumstances, to be the more prudent, circumspect and prayerful. Look after good sense, good temper, domestic habits, and, above all, the fear of God. And as, after all your caution and care, it is possible for you to be imposed upon, commit your way unto the Lord, and let integrity and uprightness preserve you while you wait upon him.

Secondly, some of you are found among the bereaved. The guide of your youth, and the

companion of your days, is removed from you; and your heart within you is often desolate. I am not wishing to open your wounds afresh. You are no longer seen leaning on your beloved: but there is another Being who now stands in the most interesting of all relations to you. He is the 'Husband of the widow.' Be not hasty to leave a condition into which his hand has led you; but as a widow indeed, continue trusting in God with all your heart; and hold communion with the hour when you shall re-unite with those who are gone before, and are now waiting to receive you into everlasting habitations.

Thirdly, some of you are in a state that admits of our congratulations. You are affianced to those who are sensible of your value; whose inclinations fall in with their duty; who render love for love, confidence for confidence, attention for attention.

But I feel for *others*. The flattery which once perhaps your ear was too eager to drink in, has ended in disappointment and sorrow; and your eye poureth out tears unto God. Perhaps you were too sanguine in your ex-

pectations. Perhaps you looked for more in the relation than reason and scripture have ever promised to afford. Perhaps now, upon the whole, you have but little reason to complain. Every state has its deductions.

But admitting it to be otherwise, allow me to ask, Has there been no blame-worthiness attached to yourselves? Have you done every thing in your power to render yourselves and your religion approved? You know the preacher does not join in the vulgar and unjust reflections cast upon your sex; but there are temper-flaws unsightly, and there are tongue-flaws intolerable. 'Better to dwell in a corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house. A continual dropping in a rainy day, and a contentious woman are alike.' Are you slatterns? Do you love disorder? Are you idle, tattlers, busy-bodies, wandering from house to house? Are you keepers at home? Do you render your dwelling attractive? Do you make it the asylum of your husband from the toils and troubles of life? Does he find it the scene of accommodation, and peace, and cheerfulness? When abroad,

is he 'stung with the thoughts of home;' and is the most delightful part of his absence the moment that turns his face towards the loved place of his rest?

We know that you *can*—we have too often witnessed it not to know—we know that you *can* present religion in every interesting and engaging form; that you *can*, not only render domestic life graceful, but piously attractive; that you *can* fan into a flame an expiring devotion; that you *can* give excellence and energy to every good word and work; that you *can* teach and enforce with a persuasive ease, and a tender mildness, whose influence is rarely without some success. Have you employed *these* efficiencies in connexion with every other? For let me tell you, my sisters, if you have not availed yourselves of your *religious means*, and used them *with prayer*, *perseveringly*, and *wisely*, and *invitingly*, you have as yet no absolute cause to complain, if your relative condition be not such as you would have it.

After all, with the exception of human infirmity, we will suppose a possible case. You

have nothing to reproach yourself with; and yet your 'house is not so with God.' Even here we have a few words of advice to offer. Be not forward to complain openly, not only because noisy grief is seldom deemed very worthy of sympathy; but also because, in your peculiar case, it is more likely to add to the evil than to remove it. Exposure not only mortifies, but commonly exasperates, and hardens; and the man, not only feeling the loss of self-respect, but the esteem of others, becomes reckless in his conduct. Beware of retaliation and reproach. Render not railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing. Ever follow the example of the Lord Jesus, 'who, when he suffered, threatened not, but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously.' Especially avoid every thing that is irritating when the mind of your husband is in a feverish and inflamed state; and when a season of speaking returns, remember, a soft answer turneth away wrath, while grievous words stir up anger. Yielding pacifieth great offences. And let me not offend while I hint, that it is not authority but influence, that belongs to your

condition; and that your influence is not derived from violence and insistings, but from prepossessings, amiableness, a willingness to waive even a right, and a desire to please rather than to conquer. And says not the apostle the same? 'Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands: that, if any obey not the word, they also may, without the word, be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation, coupled with fear: whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of the meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands; even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.'

Some men, it must be acknowledged, seem

strangers to all refinement of feeling; and cannot be overcome by even the meekness of wisdom. Yet if the address of tenderness and entreaty be unhappily useless, all carriage of an opposite character will be *more* than useless. The being upon whom gentleness and good nature are lost, can never be amended by ill-humour and clamour. A man of sense will often, for the sake of propriety or peace, submit to be talked down by a wife talented in this species of oratory; but a man destitute of sense, will be sure to retort such treatment with double violence and insult. 'With the well-advised is wisdom:' while fools are the most unpersuadable of all animals. But you should not marry fools. You may be imposed upon with regard to piety: but you cannot be mistaken with regard to sense.

But if, after all your blamelessness and commendableness, you are in the affliction we have been endeavouring to prevent, one source of relief is open: carry your distress to the mercy-seat; and spreading it before the God of all comfort, say, 'Lord, all my desire is before Thee, and my groaning is not hid from

Thee.' While he permits your sufferings, he loves you; he pities you; he is on your side. He is able to turn the curse into a blessing. 'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.' We have seen wives who have been chosen in the furnace of affliction. They have had this valley of Achor given them for a door of hope. Their purposes being broken off, even the thoughts of their heart; and their prospects on life's fairest side being clouded and gloomy; they have looked out after 'a better country.' They have asked, 'Where is God my Maker, that giveth songs in the night?' They have said, 'And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee.'

A CHARGE

INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

TO

THE WIFE OF A MINISTER,

AT THE

ORDINATION OF HER HUSBAND.

'Our conditions are the best preceptors of our duties.'—*Burke.*

'Give her of the fruit of her hand: and let her own works praise her in the gates.'—*Solomon.*

PREFACE.

My READER,

You need not inquire after the time, the place, the intended receiver of this address, or the circumstances that prevented the delivery of it. Suffice it to observe, that the title is founded in truth. The case was this. At our ordinations, after the confession of faith, and prayer for the Divine influence and blessing to attend the union that has been publicly recognised between the pastor and the church, it has been always customary to address to each of the parties a CHARGE, containing suitable instructions, cautions, admonitions, and encouragements, with regard to their respective duties. Nothing can be more scriptural or proper than such an usage: and nothing will be found more interesting and edifying, when it is not eked out in dull formality, and prolonged reiterations of sameness; but is performed in the spirit and unction of the service.

But the writer had often thought, that if on these occasions a Charge could be likewise addressed to *another* personage, it would be, if not equally necessary, yet truly important. The WIFE of the preacher is indeed, as his nearest relation, interested in all that is said to *him*: and, as a fellow-member with his people, she is also concerned in all that is spoken to *them*. Yet it is easy to perceive that there is, with regard to HER, an individuality of character, and a peculiarity of condition, requiring and justifying something more than general and indiscriminate address. And the writer has always been persuaded, that one of the failures in ministerial labour has been owing to the neglect of detail and specification, in the enforcement of moral topics.

The wife of a minister is in a situation distinguished, observable, and influential. How much depends upon her principles, temper, taste, and behaviour! How various, delicate, and arduous are the duties she has to discharge! How much grace and wisdom are necessary to fill the circle of her vocation, usefully and honourably! And yet the place she is called to preside in, cannot be distinctly and expressly prepared for, by any course of previous discipline. Though the age abounds with every kind of institu-

tion; no seminary, as yet, has been founded for training up female probationers for the Levitical economy; though they are supposed to be, either from the love of distinction, or the desire of usefulness, not a few. The more needful is something like the ensuing endeavour. In making it, the Author has also the sanction of the Apostle's example. *He* deemed it necessary, not only to describe the attributes of approved Deacons and Bishops, but also of their wives: 'Even so must their WIVES be grave; not slanderers; sober; faithful in all things.'

Before the writer was diverted from his purpose, it was not his design to have given the Charge at the same time with the other two addresses; as the service already is wearisomely long: but the morning after the ordination; and while the impression of the solemnity would be yet remaining.

Nor would he have delivered it in the public assembly; for where females are concerned, publicity is not to be sought after; but in the pastor's own dwelling.

From the singleness of the service, the speaker could afford to be longer in his admonition than propriety would otherwise have allowed.

From the private nature of the engagement, he felt himself the more free from anxiety and restraint.

From the quality of the individual addressed, the mode of address itself was in some measure influenced. Females love facts and incidents, rather than discussions; illustrations, rather than arguments; imagery, rather than abstractedness; sententiousness, rather than diffusion: and though they are capable of thinking as well as the other sex, their thinking is more tempered by feeling; and they love thoughts when they are sentiments, rather than notions. Do we mean to censure this taste? It has one incomparable recommendation—it is the manner in which the scriptures are written; and where God has abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence.

Imagine then a preacher of some age, observation, and experience, and in the subject before him, of no little happy experience; imagine such a man rising and addressing his interesting auditress, while her husband, and the wives of several neighbouring ministers are present, in the form and manner following.

Bath, December 1, 1829.

ADDRESS

TO THE WIFE OF A MINISTER.

Proverbs xix. 14.

A prudent wife is from the Lord.

My esteemed friend and sister:—As this peculiar service did not arise in the preacher from affectation, or a wish to excite notice and remark, so he is persuaded your ready compliance with the proposal of it, has been only the result of a concern how to please the Lord, whose providence has called you to occupy the station you are now filling. He therefore most willingly engages in it, and hopes that the example, at least as to its spirit, will be hereafter followed. Yet he feels solicitude; and as the effort is novel and probationary, he is not a little concerned for the goodness of the precedent. He fears nothing, indeed, from

mere human opinion: he never would enter on any religious engagement unless he was at liberty to obey all the dictates of his conviction. While therefore, on the one hand, he will not seek to give pain or offence; on the other, he is bound to shun every appearance of adulation. How strange that persons should ever dare to pander to the appetite of vanity, in holy exercises, and under the immediate eye of God; instead of being raised into a dignified independence of mind, by feeling the sentiment of Elihu: 'I know not to give flattering titles: in so doing, my Maker would take me away.'

But as ignorance is not necessary to humility, so neither is it flattery to remind people of their real and relative importance, in order to make them sensible of their responsibilities, and anxious to discharge their obligations.

We rejoice that your sex is elevated to its proper rank in the community. In barbarous ages, and in all savage countries, it never rose to any of the dignities and rights of social, rational, and immortal beings. Some philosophers have strangely argued, whether men have been improved by the progress of civili-

zation, and advancement of the arts and sciences; but no one can deny that women owe much, for a happy change in their condition, to the prevalence of knowledge and polished life. Yet what were the daughters of Greece and Rome, compared with the daughters of Zion? What did even chivalry accomplish for the objects of its enthusiasm, compared with the benefits the female race have derived from the doctrine and spirit of Christianity? It is the religion of Jesus, that, far beyond every human institution, has, for you, softened the manners of the multitude, and subdued the fierceness and tyranny of physical power and dominion. It is this, that has delivered you from the discords and wretchedness of polygamy and divorce. It is this, that, instead of degrading you as the slaves, or seducers of the other sex, leads us to regard you as our companions, our friends, our sisters; the fellow-heirs of the grace of life; the daughters of the Lord Almighty. The light that has been shed upon your true destination and worth, will prevent their ever being concealed or denied in future. It is now too late to controvert

the claims which are so justly your due; or refuse to acknowledge that you must have, that you ought to have, that you are designed to have, a great influence in the relations and interests of society.

Yet the manner in which this influence is to be most properly and advantageously exerted and employed, is not only a question of wisdom, but, as far as the mind of God is made known concerning it, a matter of absolute submission. The ground of moral duty is the same with regard to all; but the exemplification of the principle must vary according to the connexions and circumstances of individuals. And therefore I need not say, that you are expressly forbidden to occupy the office of your husband, and publicly teach in the church. This prohibition will not surprise or offend any one who reflects, that God has a right to order all affairs in his own house; and that none of his decisions are arbitrary. *We* judge from very limited views of things; and in no case can we infallibly determine what may be best, eventually, and upon the whole. But his

understanding is infinite ; and his judgment is always according to truth.

Regulation is not degradation. God himself is the grand example of order. He who is above all, submits to rule. He does, not what he would, but what he ought ; or, as his word expresses it, ' what becomes him ;' what ' behoveth him ;' what ' seemeth good in his sight.'

Services uncalled of God, are unacceptable to him : he may pardon them, but he cannot reward them. The result of maintaining the laws of order and decorum, is more important to the welfare of society, than a few instances of usefulness arising from the violation of them ; and which are more noticed because they stand out to observation ; and are commonly magnified above their real desert, in consequence of their specious and immediate effect. There is danger too, that when persons have once broken their rank, and have enjoyed the sweetness of notice and applause, they will never subside into entire regularity again. Your husband would have run no little risk, had he, in the election of a wife, made choice of an expositor of the scriptures, whether in public,

or even in the social circle. Some of the same disposition would probably have been left still working the same way: as we too often see in those individuals in our churches who become occasional preachers; they seldom feel again as mere members; and are the most dissatisfied and trying hearers with whom their pastors have to deal.

Limitation is not obstruction. It confines indeed; but it is the confinement of direction, not of hindrance. It does not oppose, but guide. It resembles the banks of a river, which, not keeping the stream back, but only keeping it in, invite and aid along its course; while the current pursues the noiseless tenour of its way, even and clear, reflecting the sky, and refreshing and adorning the earth. How much better is this, than the turbid licentiousness of the flood, though it may make a greater show, and a greater noise; and draw more gazers to its spreading, wild, and dangerous invasions.

The Greeks did not permit the men to have much intercourse with female society, unless they were related; and the Asiatics laid upon

their women yet greater restraints. Hence, as Christian churches were first formed in Greece and Asia, it might have been inferred, that such females as wanted other instruction than was given in the public assemblies, must have received it in private, from some of their own sex; and that from them also, women in penury, distress, and confinement, must have received visits of succour and comfort. Accordingly we find females, eligible from their knowledge, experience, discretion, and age, were appointed for these purposes. They are often referred to in the Epistles. Paul speaks of those 'women that laboured with him in the gospel.' In the earlier periods of Ecclesiastical History, we perceive women having some offices analogous to those of the men. But they were of a private nature. Our brethren, the Moravians, retain some functions of this kind; and we believe no man, among them, can be a pastor who is unmarried; as there are services required of the wife, as well as of the husband. But none of them are consonant with the public ministration of the word. How far any appointments of a similar order might

be profitably established in our churches, it would not be perhaps improper to inquire.

But we are not going at present to attempt any new schemes. We deem it preferable to take things as they are; and endeavour to improve what is practicable; rather than to deal in what is speculative. We therefore say, that without the assumption of office; and without leaving the sphere of engagement suited to your sex and station, you may, in an eminent degree, serve your own generation by the will of God. Let me freely develop and enforce what I should deem necessary to your securing so desirable an attainment.

I presume on your personal religion. It is said of Zachariah and Elisabeth, that 'they were *both* righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless.' If a Christian is to 'marry only in the Lord,' how indispensable is this requisition to a minister. If *he* sets at nought the divine precaution, he not only by his example justifies others in forming unhallowed connexions, but his own wickedness will correct him; and he will be made to feel, in the

natural consequences as well as in the penal rebuke, what an evil and bitter thing it is to forsake the fear of the Almighty. His case indeed is to be pitied, should he have been imposed upon after serious and candid examination. And there have been wives who have made pretensions, to gain the upright, who are always the most unsuspecting. And when the mask has been afterwards thrown aside, what an astounding discovery has it been to the deceived, and what a degradation to the deceiver! And when the disguise has continued, what a wretched constraint has been necessary to keep up appearances! And what irksomeness has been endured in being so often engaged in the exercises of unfelt devotion! And what excuses have been made for omitting duties, against the drudgery of which the alienated heart has revolted! And what can be more likely to impair conscience, and to produce impenitence, than 'lying against the Holy Ghost?' 'And what is the hope of the hypocrite, though she hath gained, when God taketh away her soul?' 'But we are persuaded better things of you, and things that

accompany salvation, though we thus speak.' Yet, though in your case, the reality of godliness be indispensable, it is not sufficient. Every thing in the claims of your calling requires, not only that you should fear God, but that you should fear God above many; not only that you should know the truth as it is in Jesus, but be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; not only that you should be sincere and without offence, until the day of Christ, but be thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Here let me speak of your deportment—

With regard to THEM THAT ARE WITHOUT.

With regard to OTHER RELIGIOUS PARTIES.

With regard to your OWN CHURCH AND CONGREGATION.

With regard to your FAMILY.

With regard to your HUSBAND.

First; with regard to THEM THAT ARE WITHOUT. Of these your husband is to have a 'good report, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.' It must be the same

with you: for though less conspicuous than himself, you will not escape observation.

You are required to be firm and decided. You must keep your high and holy ground, and not be drawn down into the course of this world. If you comply with their wishes, and conform to their maxims and manners, they may like you more, but they will esteem you less. It is by your consistency that you are to strike and impress others. They will not regard, what they see you make light of yourselves: and surely you cannot evince the importance you attach to the truths you profess, by owning them at one time, and being ashamed of them at another, according to the place and company in which you are found: but only by the constancy of your adherence to them, and the sacrifices you are ready to make in their defence.

Yet tenderness must be connected with decision, both to qualify it, and to prove the source from which it results—that it is not the offspring of obstinacy, but principle; that it is not self-will, but a regard to the will of God; that it is not prejudice, but enlightened

conviction. Whoever in this cause contends earnestly, must yet strive lawfully. A polemic of your sex is rarely desirable. A theological Joan of Arc we would rather decline altogether. The Amazons of orthodoxy, as those of old, may amputate the breast, the better to draw the bow: but we prefer their feeling to their fierceness; and their charms to their courage. They are not only most lovely, but most efficient, when unarmed, and attired in the meekness and gentleness of Jesus Christ.

In your social intercourse, be careful to unite discretion with integrity. Be concerned not only to maintain your reputation, but the honour of your religion. Do not imagine that truth is an altar that sanctifies every offering. Plead for no doctrine in an uncharitable temper. Christian faithfulness does not require ill-nature; and gains nothing by ill-breeding. It is a poor way of usefulness, to lose all future opportunities of doing good to your fellow-creatures, by driving them away from your presence, or hardening their minds against you. Yet how often is this done by the haughtiness

of reproof! or the violence of controversy! or the rancour of party zeal!

Treat no one with rudeness or neglect. Shun the spirit of the Pharisee, trusting in himself that he is righteous, and despising others: 'Stand by thyself; come not near to me; I am holier than thou.' Mixing with company prevents the appearance and suspicion of unamiableness; and has the effect of promoting good neighbourhood, and general good will. Remember that what gentility would require of you as an accomplishment, Christianity enjoins upon you as a virtue; and what a woman of good breeding receives from education, you are to derive from religion; and what is only in the people of the world the hollowness of ceremony, is to be in you the reality of principle. 'Politeness,' says lord Chatham, 'is benevolence in little things.' It consists in general attention; in doing civil offices, and using kind words to all; in keeping every offensive subject out of view; in never obtruding your own partialities; but always minutely regarding the wishes of others; in accommodating yourselves as much as you

innocently can, to their habits and tastes; in forgetting yourselves, and obliging every one about you. And what says the scripture? 'Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.' This is the way to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour; and to render the gospel not only impressive, but attractive. This is the way to walk in wisdom towards them that are without, so as to remove their prejudices, and bring them over to your cause—and 'he that winneth souls, is wise.'

Be kind and merciful, as well as obliging. Always regard the afflicted. The hour of trouble is a season of moral impressiveness: the heart is then more serious and more soft. While the daughters of vanity and dissipation turn away from the abodes of penury and wo; be you a little image of Him, who is a very present help in trouble. When Mr. Howard presented his wife with a purse of one hundred guineas to enable her to take a summer's excursion: 'what a pretty cottage,' said she, 'will this build for a poor family!' How much more pure, and satisfying and durable, was the pleasure the sight of this little temple of charity

afforded her, than what she could have derived from a visit to a watering-place! It was a common saying of the Lord Jesus, who, from experience, knew the deliciousness infinitely better than any other being: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' It is to be lamented, that many in your station have it so little in their power to gratify their benevolence: but whatever resources your husband commands, he will readily allow you a share of the pleasure and honour arising from the application of them: and the beneficence which should distinguish a minister's wife, is not confined to alms-givings. There are alms-deeds. There are numberless ways in which a feeling heart can reach distress. When it cannot succour, it can soothe.

It is important to be able to give advice to the poor. They are often thriftless and wasteful, from ignorance, as much as from negligence. But they may be taught to make a little go a great way; and actual and personal instruction may do much more than printed tracts.

Some little knowledge also of medicine would be always an instrument of usefulness

in female charity; and none could more advantageously use it than a pastor's wife.

Your sex are sometimes called angels. The design has not always been laudable: and the flattery, it is to be feared, has sometimes turned them into fallen angels. But you may truly deserve the praise of the title. Our Saviour, speaking of children, says, 'Despise not one of these little ones; for their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven.' And, says Paul, 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them that are the heirs of salvation?' Make these beautiful and lovely creatures your models. A female is never so angelical as when she adds to her personal graces the moral attractions; and displays the tender heart; the melting eye; the soft hand binding up the wounded spirit; and the foot with eager steps at the door of misery, visiting the fatherless and the widows in their affliction.

Secondly; with regard to OTHER RELIGIOUS PARTIES. You must not judge of persons by their walking with *you*, in the outward fellow-

ship of the gospel. They may assemble in other places, and belong to other denominations, in which the worship of the Spirit is equally maintained, and the word of life is equally preached; and be members of the one true church of the living God. And being such, you are not at liberty to show an indifference to them. You *must* be able to say, 'Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity:' 'Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.'

As your husband professes to maintain the character of a worker together with all those who hold the same essential truth, though they differ from him in matters of inferior moment; you should aim and endeavour to cherish in him the spirit of love and concord. Be not offended or grieved at hearing the commendations and successes of other ministers, as if they eclipsed the excellencies, or detracted from the usefulness, of one for whom it is natural that you should feel peculiarly concerned. He that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together. He that planteth, and he

that watereth, are not enemies or rivals. The various officers in an army, and the various builders in the house, require and aid each other.

When the Wesleyan Methodists opened a Chapel at Painswick, near his own meeting, the late excellent Cornelius Winter prayed three times publicly the preceding Sabbath for their encouragement and success. When Mr. Hoskins, of Bristol, the Independent Minister of Castle-Green, opened a Meeting in Temple Street; what did the incomparable Easterbrooke, the vicar of the parish? The morning it was opened, he was almost the first that entered it. He seated himself near the pulpit. When the service was over, he met the preacher at the foot of the stairs, and shaking him with both hands, said aloud; 'I thank you cordially, my dear brother, for coming to my help—here is room enough for us both; and work enough for us both; and much more than we can both accomplish: and I hope the Lord will bless our co-operation in this good cause.'

There is too little of this in many neighbourhoods; so that if the leaders of the several

interests are not in a state of hostility, they are estranged, and shy of each other. And there is often, we fear, a secret influence exerted *very near the throne;* and arising, not from a bad heart, but quick and feverish feeling, that contributes to produce and perpetuate the effect.

A man cannot receive a higher commission than the ministry of the word; and such we are commanded to esteem very highly in love for their works' sake. Their acceptance is necessary to their usefulness; and their reputation is necessary to their acceptance. Beware, therefore, of speaking freely or lightly of the character and claims of any of God's servants. Remember how Miriam erred in her flippancy, when, jealous of the popularity of Moses, she endeavoured to lower him comparatively in the estimation of the people. God was displeased. The cloud removed from the tabernacle. And 'she became a leper as white as snow.' And was 'ashamed' to be seen abroad 'for seven days.' Crimes are not immediately and visibly judged now, as they were under a former dispensation. And it is

well they are not. If Miriam's infirmity was followed by Miriam's correction, we know some handsome faces, and some not very handsome, whose cadaverous complexion would soon require seclusion and concealment; while the mortified sufferers would be grateful for the prayers of those they have laboured to supplant or depreciate, to restore them to comeliness and sight. 'Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?'

Thirdly; with regard to your own CHURCH AND CONGREGATION. Here, like your husband, you are to be 'an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.'

Never let your behaviour be so reserved, as to appear haughty and disdainful towards any of the members or attendants; especially any of those in humbler life. A little partiality here, will be sure to awaken the remark; 'The rich have many friends.' Your leaning should should rather be to the other side; not only because it will do more honour to your motive,

and you will be complying with the injunction, 'condescend to men of low estate;' but also because so many of the subjects of divine grace are found among the poor of this world; no few of whom are rich in faith; and able, from their own experience, to reward your intercourse with them.

Never be drawn into excessive attachments. They gender envy and provoke reflection. Like himself, a minister's wife is hardly allowed friendship; at least, great and engrossing intimacies. She stands in the same relation to many; and must be respectful and attentive to all. If she cannot hinder the existence of particular feelings and preferences; she may, she must learn to rule the expression of them. Many in your rank, especially the narrow-minded and the ill-educated, always have their cronies, a kind of low favourites, decent dependents, the collectors of all the news of the church, congregation, and neighbourhood, and who can feed their entertainers with timely selections, according to their peculiar appetite and wishes, with which they are perfectly acquainted. Flee these. Beware of all news-

mongers. Frown them to a distance. Chill them into silence. What says the proverb? 'The receiver is as bad as the thief.' What says the witty and sarcastical South? 'The tale-bearer, and the tale-hearer, should be both punished together; only the one should be hung up by the tongue, and the other by the ear.'

After all your caution, there are things which you will unavoidably hear; but you must hear them, as if you heard them not, and you need not relate them. Be not suspicious, yet never be too open. Never put yourself, by imprudent confidence, in the power of any. Never betray secrets, the divulging of which may involve you in embarrassment or disgrace.

Keep yourself aloof from all breaches in the families of your people, and any differences that may arise in the church or congregation. There is danger here, from your being, with regard to such things, in the way of much prattling information; and unless you are guarded, you will be easily drawn in, and become a partizan: and when a female has taken her side, which seldom requires much time;

she is apt to be more open than false; and frequently feels and expresses more than principle, or at least prudence, can justify. Never show or wish to be 'a judge and a divider.' Never be found in the Ecclesiastical Court. Leave these matters to those to whom they properly belong, and who 'have the rule.' I never knew a minister's wife, but was esteemed and admired in proportion as she shunned contention and intermeddling, and kept within the duties of her own appropriate and lovely sphere. It is better to withdraw, and retire, and weep, and pray, than to excite notice, and gain partial praise, with the froward, and even the forward in spirit. 'Who is a wise' woman, 'and endued with knowledge?' 'Let' her 'show out of a good conversation' her 'works with meekness of wisdom. For where envy and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits; without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, of them that make peace.'

In the visits you pay and receive, be always ready to encourage religious discourse. Let this appear to be the element the most congenial with your spirit. Let your speech turn habitually on subjects, rather than persons. Especially, speak evil of no man. 'Upon her tongue was the law of kindness.' In a general way, be rather reserved than over communicative. We have many good discourses, says archbishop Tillotson, on the excellency of speech; we want one now on the excellency of silence. 'In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin.' How often does Solomon, the wisest of mortals, enforce a *comparative* backwardness to speak. In one place he tells us it is safe; in another, it is wise; in a third, it is dignified; in a fourth, it is useful; and every where he extols it as a virtue. Nature, my sister, teaches us this lesson as well as scripture. It has given us two ears, but one tongue: the former avenues are always left open; the latter organ is easily enclosed—as much as to say, 'Be swift to hear; but slow to speak.' Here, alas! 'who can understand his errors?' Who can read the testimony of

Jesus—'Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment'—and not pray, 'Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips!' If *your* connexions and intercourse afford you more opportunities and excitements to speak, so much the more necessary is it that 'your speech should be always with grace, seasoned with salt.' I urge this, because of its peculiar and neglected importance. Surely, what James says of our sex will apply equally to yours, especially to a female in your relation. 'If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man; and able also to bridle the whole body.'

Fourthly; with regard to YOUR FAMILY. By this I here mean servants and children.

Upon the former I shall not much enlarge. Surely, in the treatment of your servants, it will not be necessary to remind you, that you have a Master in heaven, and that there is no respect of persons with God. He that has created you, made them. No being is despicable as a creature of the Most High, so

fearfully and wonderfully made: and no one is to be contemned on the ground of power and influence. Domestics can injure you; their very situation gives them peculiar means and opportunities; and they may employ their advantage in ways of which you have no apprehension, and which render counteraction difficult or impossible. It is never desirable to wage war with inferiors: you must descend to the same lowness of contention, and employ weapons, in the use of which, they are likely to be much more expert than yourself, while the sympathy of beholders will be most naturally drawn to the weaker side. Think not a hint of this kind beneath your notice. It will procure you more discredit than you are aware of, to be always, or often, changing your servants; or to wear the character of a harsh, scolding, close, stingy mistress.

Sink not your proper distinction, by suffering your affability to degenerate into familiarities. Neither let your kindness disappear in your authority. Servitude being established against the natural equality of mankind, should be softened as much as the duties of it will

allow. Consider your servants as humble friends. Little minds endeavour to support their consequence by distance and hauteur: but true dignity is always condescending and tender: and in a woman, we admire, not what is stately, but what is endearing; not what is dazzling, but what is mild and lovely; not what is great, but what is graceful. Forbear threatening. Distinguish between mistakes, and the want of principle. Pass by little infirmities. Is it reasonable that the mistress should exact from a servant, the perfection, the servant can never expect from the mistress? Afford your domestics occasional indulgence; and especially moments for reasonable visits to their relations and friends. Let the readiness to commend you to others, the tear when you leave home, the beaming countenance when you return, the eager and uncomplaining attendance and watching by day and night in your sickness, show that you have gained the heart, as well as hired the hand, and are served, not by the sullenness of fear, but the cheerfulness of affection. Above all, you will not overlook the moral and spiritual welfare of

those who are not only under your *command* but under your *care*—and you will care for their *souls*. You will not only give them opportunity to attend the means of grace, and family worship; but you will personally instruct, reprove, encourage them. However ignorant they may come into your service, it will be a disgrace to the mistress for them to depart unable to read the scriptures.

With regard to the children the Lord may graciously give you, your husband of course will share with you in the discharge of parental duty. But though, here, you are not exclusively, yet you are really, you are deeply, and, in some respects, peculiarly concerned. In all the animal creation, the *maternal* instincts are the most powerful; and the wisdom of the provision is obvious—the rearing of their offspring almost entirely belongs to the mother. In the education of children—of the daughters till they are married; and of the sons till a certain age—the care falls chiefly on the female. To her belong unquestionably the *first* years of both; and those periods are the most tender and ductile. Her share of tuition,

therefore, begins very early; and it cannot begin too early. Infants are impressed before they are supposed to be receptive of impression; and they are proceeding in a direction before we think they are capable of motion. They can remember before they can reason; and they can judge before they can speak; as you see by their looks and gestures, their attractions and their aversions. Here your wisdom and your vigilance must be awake, instantly to seize and improve opportunities, apparently insignificant, but most serious in their effects. The roads that lead to places very remote from each other, diverge very slenderly at their beginnings. When I wish the branch of a tree in my garden to occupy a particular space, I can guide it, while a sucker, with a thread: a few years after it will require a rope; and the attempt to bend it will be likely to break.

As a mother too, from his endeared dependence upon you, you are sure of the child's first and liveliest attachment. And you have always the advantage of immediate access. And you have also the influence of that insin-

uation and address which our sex has not the faculty to possess, or the patience to employ. One of the absurd opinions of former times was, that poison never diffused itself so quickly and powerfully as when it was administered in human milk — nothing certainly affects so much as what is imbibed with the mother's milk. In the age of Silver, Hesiod says, poetically, children continued, during an infancy of one hundred years, under maternal care.

I am weary, said the ambitious Cornelia, of being called Scipio's daughter. Do something, my sons, to style me the mother of the Gracchi. What an honour will be conferred on you, if you should be the means of rearing a disciple of Jesus! an heir of God! a minister of the gospel! an ambassador to the heathen! And why should you be discouraged? We know that human nature is depraved; but we know the grace that is in Christ Jesus. We do not think of your success without his blessing; but we encourage you to seek it: and while, in dependence upon it, you employ all the means in your power, remember his own word: 'Train up a child in the way that

he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' This is indeed a proverb, and therefore admits of exceptions: but, as a proverb, it must be generally true: and where the mother has performed her part, there are few failures, at least *eventual* failures. For a time she may have seemed to labour in vain; but she sowed the seed in good season; and though impatience deemed it dead, some after-showers and sunshines caused it to spring up, and bring forth fruit. So it was with the mother of Augustine. You have also heard, to the same effect, the grateful acknowledgments of a Newton and a Cecil in later times. While many, by maternal influence, have been reclaimed from the paths of the Destroyer, others, and who can tell their number, others have been preserved, and have feared the Lord from their youth and their infancy. This was the case with Samuel and Timothy; the Jewish church being indebted for the former to Hannah, and the Christian church to Lois and Eunice for the latter. David does not any where refer to Jesse; but, says he, 'Save the son of thine handmaid.' 'I am the son of

thine handmaid.' And who can tell what early and touching recollections of *her* early, and tender, and pious solicitude, he felt at the moment of such appeals?

At our ordinations, when the candidate has been asked a reason of the hope that he has been called by divine grace, how often, if he has adverted to the means, has a tear, which instantly drew forth kindred drops from the eyes of others, almost interrupted the confession, 'I had the advantage of a pious mother.'

You cannot have forgotten the acknowledgment, on the preceding day, of one so dear to you: 'I have no miracle to publish: I have no surprising or sudden change to relate; but blessed be his name, I was brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; the taking of my little hand in her's; I think I feel it still, and leading me aside to pray; her concern on returning from the house of God, to enable me to remember and understand the sermon; the murmur of her dear voice at her devotion as I passed her chamber door; the maxims and principles she lodged in my infant mind; the tears that bedewed her reproofs;

the caresses that enforced her entreaties; her cheerfulness, that constantly said, 'O taste and see that the Lord is good;' her example, that embodied her religion, and made it as lovely as herself—these endear the memory of a mother, from whom, under God, I have derived my spiritual, as well as my natural life.'

You are not commonly in danger of injuring or overlooking the health of your offspring intentionally; but wisdom is profitable to direct. A little medical advice, and observation and experience in the service of common sense, will enable you to see the importance of air and exercise, of sweetening the blood by a proper choice of food, and of preventing ailments by simplicity of diet, and keeping nature unclogged by excess. Never accustom them at table to choose for themselves: you are the best judge as to the quality and measure of their provisions; and they cannot be too early taught to give up self-will to superior wisdom.

Were I addressing your partner, I should say, 'Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.' But *your* danger generally lies on the other side. There-

fore, beware of fond and foolish indulgence. Trifles may be passed over, and some minor offences be safely buried in the bosom of maternal tenderness; but conceal no faults your children may commit, of a more serious nature, from the father; nor, if you *privately* plead for the softening of correction, never counteract the effort of rebuke, by appearing to oppose it at the time. In all matters of moral rule and discipline, nothing is more necessary than for the parents to be seen agreed and decided.

Endeavour to cultivate the manners of your children; and render them examples of good behaviour. If they are forward, and impertinent, and rude, and disorderly, insulting to inferiors, disrespectful to superiors, disobedient to parents, the minister as well as the mother will be blamed; for he is to be 'one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?'

Be not regardless of their dress. Let it not be costly and fine. If, through the inconsideration of friendship, things are given them,

above the propriety of their condition, let them be refused, or exchanged, or altered. Instead of cherishing, even indirectly, a fondness for attire, endeavour to subdue, or rather prevent it. This, however, requires much skilfulness, especially with daughters; and all precepts will be more than vain, unless they are enforced by your own example.

Keep them from visiting too much. Some, from a regard to their father's character and office, may not only invite your children, but contribute to spoil them, by making too much of them; and giving them ideas and feelings above their rank. On this principle, they should rarely, if ever, visit families of superior condition, lest they should grow dissatisfied with the plainness and sobrieties of home.

And push them not too soon and too much into observation. Especially when your children are *present*, never in company notice and extol any particular quality or attainment; with regard to which, you will thereby assuredly render them false and vain; and stimulate them to forwardness and talking, against which you cannot guard them too much. Hearing

you thus admire them, they think every one else does the same. In your attentions to them, therefore, before others, let them not perceive any particular solicitude on your part to set them off by their talents. Be content to form their minds by slow degrees; and remember, that if it were in your power to advance them in knowledge beyond their years, it would not be desirable; for what is the advantage of premature ability, compared with the danger of pride, arrogance, and self-sufficiency?

No; nor in their *absence* be even eager to bring forth their parts and sayings. Not only does modesty require this, but a regard to the feelings of others: you have no right to embarrass your company, by obliging them to commend and admire things which *they* may not deem so wonderful and clever as the mother. What a child had Mary! How many prodigies could she have brought forward! 'But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.' I am aware that this maternal propensity is not peculiar to the wives of ministers; but they are more in danger of

it than many others, and the weakness will be more observable in them.

Devote a portion of your time expressly every day to the improvement of your infant charge. Prudence must determine when, and how long it should be; but after deciding, be persevering and firm in adhering to your plan; and let interrupters no more break in upon it, than upon the time sacred to the studies of your husband.

Especially employ, without making it irksome and tiresome, a portion of the Sabbath to the examination and instruction of your children. Yet we have known the wives of some ministers, who have been fonder of attending Sunday schools, and *addressing* them, than of being 'teachers of babes' at home. Sunday schools must have their attendance, and much praise is due to those who dedicate to their service so many of their hours: but if persons have originated families, *these* must be *their* first care: 'He that provideth not for his own, especially those of his own house, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.'

Fifthly; with regard to YOUR HUSBAND. He is your chosen and dearest relation; and in this connexion another is involved. *Your* husband is also your pastor; and thus an additional reason is furnished why you should 'reverence' him, and 'submit' to him. It is little honourable to any party, when, not only the head of the family, but the ruler of the synagogue, is supposed to be under government. In whose hand soever the sceptre be found, it is the sign of dominion; and however softly it may be swayed, they who are under it are the subjects. But, indeed, women who assume the reins, seldom manage them with moderation, or dignity. All usurpers, whatever was their previous disposition, incline to tyranny and display; and, unlike those who naturally and legitimately govern, are never satisfied but as their power is felt and acknowledged.

In no case does it become the wife to exercise *authority* over the man she has promised to obey: and she is a vain and a weak woman, who exposes to observation even the *influence* which in many cases she is justified in using. Whom does the poet commend?

'She, who ne'er answers till her husband cools,
Or, if she rules him, never shows she rules;
Charms by accepting, by submission sways,
Yet has her humour most when she obeys.'

When Livia had attained such an ascendancy over her husband Augustus that there was hardly any thing he would refuse her, though emperor of the world, many of the married ladies of Rome were anxious to know the secret and the source of her success: to whom she replied, '1 rule by obeying.' We need not inquire from what cause it arises, but a man soon acquires a notion of the superiority of his own sex. This

'Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength.'

He is tenacious to maintain it; and therefore is jealous of every attempt to reduce it. But it has been observed, that he possesses at the same time a sentimental tenderness towards the other sex; and an inclination to please and indulge them; and thus, while he would domineer, he is subdued. This has been called his weak side. Be it so; the use of it is obvious; and a woman of sense can always turn it to advantage, and found on it a better dominion than authority—an empire of address

and affection ; caresses, her orders ; tears, her menaces ; and silence and submission, her arms. Here she can do wonders, because she appeals to nature itself; and is supported by a principle implanted in us by the wise Creator to humble the pride of power, and to compensate those who have not the force to conquer, by giving them the fascination to charm.

Never forget, therefore, that your means of sway must have for their basis, gentleness, sweetness, and good temper ; and that they must be so exercised, as to allow your husband to believe that he is supporting his sovereignty, even while he is yielding it. The *show* even of *influence* will alarm his vanity and consequence ; but the discovery of your intention to succeed, by any thing like authority, harshness, or sullenness, will not only produce disappointment, but gender resistance or disgust. No man of feeling was ever proof against the kindness of a sensible woman : but where, in all history, can an instance be produced, in which an ascendancy over him has been obtained by frowardness, scolding, and strife for pre-eminence ?

Observe, however, that what we have said of influence, goes not to justify that low and artful cunning, by which some endeavour to carry a favourite purpose. If we can depend upon the writers of a former age, the grand resource of a lady, whose lord denied her any thing on which she had set her heart, was to fall into an hysteric. The ministry of fits and vapours seems now to be nearly closed. But, says an excellent writer, 'Let not the dispositions, by which it was introduced and upheld, be found to survive its fall. Let it ever be remembered that she, who by teazing, by wheedling, by finesse, under any shape whatever, seeks to deceive or to weary into acquiescence or consent, acts no less plainly in opposition to her duty of scriptural obedience, than she would have done, had she driven him into compliance by the menaces and weapons of an Amazon.'

This general, but very important requisite in your conduct towards your husband being settled; you will allow me to mention a few other articles deserving your candid regard.

Such is an attention to his *personal appear-*

ance. He will detest being a fop; and you will not allow him to be a sloven. You will not wish to see him waving the ring on his lily hand, nor indulging

> 'A silly, fond conceit of his fair form
> And just proportion, fashionable mien
> And pretty face, in presence of his God.'

Even comparative

> 'Slovenly neglect, and rustic coarseness,'

are better than affectation and finicality. But these are not good in themselves. Purity, neatness, decency, become the man of God in his appearance and apparel; and his want of it will draw reflection upon you.

Such is an attention to his *property.*

These must be the matters in which the apostle says, the wife is to 'guide the house.' Paul would not have a minister entangled with the affairs of this life; that he may know how to please Him that has called him to be a soldier. Keep your husband as much as possible disengaged from secular things, that he may feel himself free for his work, both in the preparation and the discharge. The kind of keenness and cleverness in worldly business,

often admired in others, would have a lowering effect in a minister. The pantry, the shop, the market-place, the slang and the tricks of the huckster, would be incongruous and desecrating in him. His tact is to be of another order, and to evince itself in the things of God. 'Is it reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables?' Therefore deacons were appointed even to provide for the bodily relief of the poor of the church; while 'we,' says the apostle, 'give ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word.'

In vain the husband labours and gains, if you, in your ill housewifery, are wilfully expensive; or negligently profuse; or ignorantly wasteful. 'Every wise woman buildeth her house; but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.' Let nothing deprive *you* of the commendation: 'She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.' What is the cleverness of a female showing away out of her sphere of duty? what is a sprightly wit? a smartness in conversation? an epistolary talent? or a smattering of the languages? Will these raise and recommend

a woman in the midst of a neglected, ill-managed, disordered, sinking family ?

Despise not a little knowledge of arithmetic —some accomplishments may be much less useful. Shun arrears. Be regular in demanding, and punctual in discharging your weekly accounts. If you commanded abundance, the scripture would say to you, 'Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost;' and there are many purposes to which the fruit of frugality may be applied; but how absolutely indispensable must inspection and strictness be, where the resources to be managed are limited!

It is not necessary that your husband should appear as a gentleman, and awaken feelings of rivalship in civil things among his people, or neighbours. Never remind him of the superior circumstances of others, or urge him even indirectly to live beyond his means; and judge of these, not by his occasional, but expected income. Exercise every kind of self-denial, rather than see him involved. How trying to his feelings to be reduced to the difficulty of borrowing! How reproachful, while calling upon others to provide things

honest, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men, to incur the suspicion of being unrighteous himself!' How can he preach at all, with pleasure or freedom, though others may as yet be ignorant, while he is conscious of legal claims ready to be visited upon him.

And here you are to display your economy. You are not to regard this as a low, mean thing, fit only for the vulgar. Solomon characterizes his virtuous woman, though in high life, principally by simplicity, diligence, regularity, and domestic management: and in these the ancient Greeks and Romans placed much of female worth and excellence.

But what is economy? It is not 'the stopping of one hole in the sieve.' It is not a particular retrenchment, or an occasional saving. It is not the pinching of the servants, and stinting the family one week, to give a showy dinner the next. It is a mode of regulation that eyes the whole detail of household expense. It is the art, not of sordid saving, but of making a little go a great way way. It eludes meanness, as well as waste. Stinginess

is one extreme, profuseness is another. There is a steering between them: but this is not easy; and it requires the judgment and skill which some females seem to exercise by a kind of intuition or instinct: so that they always appear to advantage; unembarrassed; unconfused; ready, without haste; deciding, as if without design; and while causing every thing to move in its proper time and place, keeping the mechanism of the process invisible —for the perfection of art is to conceal art.

An attention to his *health of body.* This in his case is peculiarly important. It is not only the source of his comfort and enjoyment, but it is essential to his usefulness. What confusion and disappointment result from the sickness or indisposition of one on whose ministrations such numbers depend: for 'his lips feed many.' Paul does not think it beneath him to watch over the health of Timothy; and to prescribe for him like a physician; 'Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities.'

Study therefore your husband's constitutional liableness to injury; not to render him soft,

and effeminate, and fanciful, but cautious, and to aid him in the regulation of his mode of living, as to sleep, and diet, and exercise. You need not be afraid of *proper* application and exertion. These, instead of injuring the health, conduce to it. They give circulation to the fluids, and prevent the evils of stagnation: they hinder the rust of the mind, and keep the powers polished, and easy of motion. But there may be an overdoing. The machine may be over-worked. *You* will be, perhaps, by your constant and intimate observation, the best judge of the degree of labour to which he is equal. *You* will not be ignorant of his impaired digestion, his perturbed rest, his trembling nerves, his depressed spirits, his exhausted frame, and the low ebb of vigour when the Sabbath is gone, and the Monday sees him not living, but existing only. And you must not neglect to sound the timely alarm. And if zeal, without knowledge or feeling, still urges the same unremitting efforts; and tells him he cannot die in a better cause: if his spiritual task-masters require the same tale of bricks: if the *three* services of the day must still be exact-

ed from wasting strength yet growing anxiety —his blood will be upon the heads of his cruel murderers: but you have delivered your soul.

An attention to his *peace of mind.* We have met with some members of churches, who kindly think that affliction and depression are *best* for a minister. We are almost ashamed to use a coarse and unfeeling proverb among them, quite worthy, however, of the employers, and since we are not in the pulpit, let it come out: 'That the preacher never preaches so well as when the cow has trod upon his foot.' Yet it never seems to strike these cold, calculating reasoners, that *they*, as hearers, may be benefited *themselves* by a similar experience! But if domestic distress be desirable for the improvement of the preacher, so may any other kind of rueful probation: and if the physcian, in order to perfect him in his art, is to go through all the complaints for which he prescribes, he will have neither time nor ability to practise. To dismiss this delicate figure, I hope my brother's 'fair heifer' will not achieve this species of service for *him.* I am sure she will not. I am sure she will encourage him.

And he will require every favourable excitement. His work is arduous. He has trials in common with men; and he has trials in common with his fellow Christians: but he has also various trials peculiar to himself; and *you* will best know this. *You*, indeed even you, will not know *all* his heart's bitterness: but you will hear enough, see enough, to convince you that he, whose office it is to comfort others, needs no little consolation himself. And your smiles can rainbow the cloud of grief. Your soft hand can smooth the wrinkles of his oppressed brow. Your gentle words, like the fanning of an angel's wing, can cool the heatful anguish of the mind. Your kind management (a woman is never at a loss where comfort is called for) can withdraw a distracting train of thought, and substitute cheerful imagery. You can remind him of instances of usefulness, when he is complaining, 'I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought.' In his doubts and fears, with regard to his own spiritual condition, and to such he is liable, you can be the wife of Manoah, who said, 'If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not

have received an offering at our hand; nor have shown us such things as these.' If among his people he meets with mortifying defections in such as should prove a comfort to him, he will find one tried and faithful bosom in which he can safely repose. If he has storms abroad, peace will be always awaiting him at home: and he will always enjoy a resource in that unfailing good temper

> '——— Whose unclouded ray
> Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day.'

You will, indeed, be every way anxious to render his own abode, not only the tabernacle of the righteous, but the dwelling-place of tenderness and comfort. In this, his safety as well as his satisfaction will be much concerned. We have known not only men, but ministers, who have fallen by temptation: and though we by no means wish to justify or extenuate their conduct, it is no secret, that in some instances, at least, there has been little domestic happiness and attraction. What attraction *can* there be in sullenness? or in peevishness? or in clamour? 'Better is a dry morsel and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacri-

fices with strife.' 'It is better to dwell in a corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.' 'A continual dropping in a rainy day, and a contentious woman, are alike. Whoso hideth her, hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand that bewrayeth itself.' What attraction *can* there be in negligence, disorder, slatternliness? A disregard of propriety, and especially neatness of apparel, is in a female a fault that nothing can expiate. Even religion will not excuse it. There is a greater connexion between mental and outward purity than some are aware of. A female may be always judged of by her dress. The founders of Methodism were accustomed to say, that cleanliness was next to godliness. I have known a few exceptions to this, in men. I never knew one in a woman.

Rely not too much on the rights of relationship, however intimate the connexion may be, and however endeared it ought to be. In preserving and keeping alive attachment, you must not absolutely depend upon the impressions that awakened it. A woman is not to presume on the certainty of homage, regardless

of an attention to her manners. She is not, as soon as she has stepped over the threshold of marriage, to drop the delicacy, the decencies, the engaging appearance by which she attracted the lover. Men are very selfish beings. They have very little of your disinterested feelings. You must not suffer, with them, your amiableness to fail. And how is esteem to be preserved, even when the fervour of affection declines? You cannot dream of perpetual admiration. The roses and carnations are for the summer months. What provision is there for winter? What woman is the most universally valued? THE DOMESTIC. And for your encouragement be assured, that the more religious men are in their feelings, and the more improved in their understandings, the more certainly will they be attached to domestic life; always having an abundance of entertainments in private and tranquil scenes, unknown to the vulgar and the dissipated.

An attention to his *official ministrations.* On these, I need not say, you will be sure to attend regularly, when it is in your power. But for this purpose you must value them.

And here you are likely to feel some difficulties peculiar to your situation. A sage has said, 'Domestic greatness is unattainable.' The Saviour testifies that 'a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.' And if this applied in a measure even to himself, it will bear in an unspeakably greater degree on all his imperfect servants. Distance diminishes and conceals defects; while nearness discovers and enlarges them. If familiarity does not breed contempt, it reduces veneration, and injures many kinds of impression. A husband must be a very consistent character, and be known to act always from principle, to enable a wife to feel under *his* services, as under those of a stranger, whose excellences only, she has heard of, while she is ignorant of the failings that would shade them—and such we allow a husband who is a minister *ought* to be: but even when he *is* such, though he will be essentially, he cannot be circumstantially the same always. He cannot be constantly in his robes. It would be affectation to attempt to keep up always the formal dignity of his pulpit exercises. Yea, it

would be absurd even to distinguish himself in the ordinary actions and manners of life. He cannot be the preacher only; he must also appear the man, the companion, the father:

> 'And he will not blush, that has a father's heart,
> To take in childish things a childish part.'

But hence an effort will be necessary, to see, under all these common and familiar appendages of humanity, to recognize in one of like passions with yourself, and compassed about with infirmities, the man of God, the messenger of Heaven, the herald of salvation; to value the treasure as divine, though you *know* that it is contained in an earthen vessel; and to receive *his* word, 'not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God, that worketh effectually in them that believe.'

An attention to his *usefulness.* I do not mean that you should aid him in making his sermons: he ought to be able to make these himself; (neither should he steal his words from his neighbour) but you may be a helpmate to him, as to his personal religion; and need we say how much of the facility, and excellence, and success of his work, as a min-

ister, will depend upon the spirituality of his mind, and the devoutness of his heart! You may remind him of his engagements. You may excite him to diligence in his holy calling; especially in those parts of it that draw forth less notice and praise.

Wherever he is found, he ought to be useful; and diffusing the savour of the Redeemer's knowledge in every place. Be not, therefore, illiberal and selfish with regard to his company. He ought to be a lover of home, and not to be disposed to spend his evenings abroad; for they are seasons not only the most valuable to himself, but the most free and favoured to a female engaged in the affairs of a household but sometimes he must be preaching abroad. As to his civil visits, I hope he will never accept of an invitation in which you are not included: but circumstances may render it proper for him to go, when you cannot accompany him; and in such cases you will not wish to restrain him. Above all, you will not complain of his absence, when you know that he is not idling away his time in lounging calls and gossiping talk, but is sedulously engaged in his

study. While he is endeavouring to do justice to his intended subjects, and resolved not to offer to the Lord that which costs him nothing, you will even aid his people and the public, by doing all in your power to secure him from the disturbance of thoughtless intruders.

A long-standing connexion does credit both to the pastor and the church: but ministers become, not unfrequently, uneasy, and as the expression is, moveable. It has been supposed by some, that there is an unusual number of these moveables in our day: and hence the late Andrew Fuller, by a rough, but striking metaphor, observed, in a letter published since his death, that many of our modern preachers seemed stung by the gad-fly. I fear that this powerful stinger is sometimes a near relation. Not that I throw the blame always upon the wife — we know the composition of many ministers too well: but we also have seen enough occasionally on *her* side, to justify our admonishing you to beware of an unsettled and roving spirit; or of becoming too sensitive to the difficulties that may arise in your husband's residence.

In every situation there are trials. We are acquainted with those in our present circumstances, and they press us; but those of a new condition are unfelt, and even unknown: yet they may be equally, and even more numerous and painful. When a man changes often, there is danger of his getting, not only the character, but the habit of a changeling: and a rolling stone gains no moss: and a tree always transplanting cannot radicate so as to be firm, vigorous, and fruitful. We have known ministers, who, yielding to mistaken views, or present impressions, have stepped out of their place; and left not only their comfort, but their usefulness behind them. Take heed, therefore, how you in any way contribute to this evil. You should hardly let your preference, if you have one, be known, even to your husband, while he is endeavouring sincerely to ascertain what the will of God is, concerning him.

His reputation, too, will affect his usefulness. And how much does this depend upon you! From your affection you will be eager to extol him, and perhaps be angry with those who do not join in your partial applause. But let

me whisper a more excellent way. In the Protestant churches of Hungary, they degrade from his office the pastor, whose wife indulges herself in cards, dancing, or any public amusement, that bespeaks a lover of the world, rather than a Christian matron. This severity springs from the supposition, that he should not have chosen such a consort; or that she, having promised obedience, would not thus act without his approbation or permission. If no law of this kind is known among us, the spirit of it is commonly felt and expressed. Ministers are always in a measure blamed for the defects and faults of their wives: the very pity that is sometimes kindly expressed on their behalf, is constructively a sort of censure. He who acts imprudently and improperly in one case, especially if it be a matter of importance, will be judged of by it, in other things, perhaps in all. It is often said, that ministers, though they have the best opportunities of selection, and are under the greatest obligations to make a wise choice, are commonly betrayed into alliances the most ineligible. The reflection is not a little invidious; and is by far too general,

I have the happiness of knowing many most agreeable and very important exceptions. And I am fully persuaded that you, my respected friend, will be a striking addition to the number. You have it in your power to be so: you have it in your disposition. It is your aim, and it will be your attainment, to dignify your station, and reflect honour on the judgment, taste, and piety of your husband.

And be encouraged to go forward. You will not lose your reward. You may not make a splendid figure in history. You must not expect, though so closely related to him, to gain the same distinction and notice as a popular minister will obtain. While he is exalted by his office, you are left to move chiefly in scenes of comparative privacy. Your duties are regular, sober, unstriking; and furnish few materials for common panegyric. Yet even this very seeming disadvantage turns to your account. It serves to raise your worth; and to promote and display the purity of your motive. You can go on with patient continuance in well doing, without the excitement of publicity, or the claps of the multitude.

Nor will you be always undistinguished. Your day is coming. You will share in the revelation of Jesus Christ, when every one will have praise of God according to their concern to please him, and not according to the present distributions of fame. And even now you are proving what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Even now, your duties are all important and indispensable. Even now, in the convictions of reason and wisdom, you are approved and ennobled. The heart of your husband safely trusts in you; so that he hath no need of spoil: you will do him good, and not evil, all the days of your life. Your children will rise up and call you blessed. Your domestics will thank God that even they came under your kind and pious care. Your neighbours will commend you. The church and all your religious connexions will honour and love you. And God, even your own God, will bless you. He who has redeemed you by the death of his Son, and has called you by his grace: He to whom you have dedicated yourself, both in single and social life, saying, Lord, I am thine, save me—He keeps a book

of remembrance: He forgets not your work of faith and labour of love: He accepts you and your services in the Beloved; and in his favour your horn shall be exalted.

And this consolatory assurance, my esteemed friend, you will need. Your station has, indeed, its advantages, which it would be ungrateful to overlook. Your intellectual, moral, and spiritual privileges are above those of many. You have frequent access to edifying company. You have the entertainment and profit of books. You have the habitual presence of one whose lips keep knowledge. His education and acquisitions prepare him for instructive and improving conversation. His function calls him to a regular life, exempt from the bustle and competitions of the world; and is every way friendly to virtue and sensibility. His employment and his studies tend to soften, and refine, and elevate his mind: while the extreme value of character to his profession, is a spur to excellency, and a pledge of good deportment. You have the honour of being connected, not only with a man of grace, but 'a man of God;' not only with one who serves him, but serves

at the altar; and fills an office, as a preacher of the gospel, which an angel might be induced to envy.

But the honour and the advantages have their counterbalancings. I hope you have counted the cost; and instead of complaining of the difficulties before you, are determined to be the more circumspect; and the more prayerful; constantly seeking fresh supplies of that grace which alone is sufficient for you in all your duties, and in all your trials.

And trials you must not expect to escape. From envy or ignorance you may often be misjudged and misrepresented: for persons who act upon principle, especially in peculiar situations, cannot be comprehended by those, 'who walk as men;' and people are always more ready to be censorious than to be candid in what they do not understand. Nothing is more uncertain than the applause of the religious multitude. Your husband, now caressed, may be neglected. His place, now crowded, may be thinned of its attendants by one far his inferior—unless in novelty, and lungs. Some Diotrephes may love to have the pre-eminence,

and prate against him with malicious words. A perverse spirit may be mingled in the midst of a peaceful people. The Antinomian leaven may corrupt the purity, and mar the prosperity of the church. And at the discovery of his perplexity and distress, a sword also may pierce through your own soul.

The calling of your husband exposes him to temptations; and he may be injured by them. He may yield to vain imaginations, and high thoughts, that exalt themselves; and give up the simplicity there is in Christ Jesus. If he does not embrace dangerous errors, he may be enticed into some peculiarities, and injure his influence by some religious freaks and vagaries. He may be found among the prophets. Instead of preaching repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; and having a word in season for him that is weary: he may employ himself in breaking open the seals, and blowing the trumpets, and pouring out the vials of the Apocalypse. The spiritual man may be mad. Popular applause (for as the fining-pot for silver, and the furnace for gold, so is a man to

his praise) may elevate him into pride and arrogance. Entertained and idolized as a very agreeable and clever companion, he may grow weary of the tameness of ordinary life; and disrelish home; and leave you to serve alone in the cares of a rising family. I dare not suppose any thing further; yet what changes have we witnessed in a course of years! Lord, what is man!

But it cannot be concealed that he is frail and mortal. You may have to pray, 'Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick.' You may be called to the trying alternative of leaving a helpless babe, to accompany the father who journeys for health. You may have to watch at the side of the couch of infirmity, and of the bed of languishing. You may have to faint at the stillness of a dying hour; and only revive to learn that the guide of your youth, the arm of your support, the comforter that should relieve you soul, is gone; and the place that once knew him, will know him no more forever; his usual seat; his favourite walk; the sacred desk where yet his image seems to dwell—

You may not only be left a widow. You may be surrounded with bereaved children; and have to struggle with hardships—perhaps penury—perhaps neglect. Perhaps you may be destined, like many who have gone before you, to learn by experience the little posthumous generosity and kindness there is, towards the remnants of those who have worn out life in the service of the religious public. 'Is this Naomi?' 'Call me not Naomi; call me Marah; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full—'

Yet some true friendship will be found. Some will show kindness to his house for Jonathan's sake. There are the grey-headed, who are saying, 'I have been young and now am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. Even in the cloudy and dark day, when the eye pours out tears unto God, he will be your refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble. Your departed friend, when dying, heard him say, though you could not: 'Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widow trust in me.' And

He is faithful who promised. Lean upon his word, and you shall find him to be a 'Father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows in his holy habitation.'

And if, while feeling the attraction of your now glorified partner, who is waiting to receive you to himself, you should yet linger long in this vale of tears, He who has delivered will deliver. He will guide you with his counsel; and when you approach the end of your journey, He will hear your prayer of faith: 'Cast me not off in the time of old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth. Thou, who hast shown me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again; and bring me up again from the dust of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.' 'AND THE DAYS OF THY MOURNING SHALL BE ENDED.'

DOMESTIC HAPPINESS.

Psalm cxviii. 15.

The voice of rejoicing is in the tabernacles of the righteous.

NOTHING can more usefully engage our attention than Human Nature and Human Life. 'The proper study of mankind is Man.' His origin and his end; the structure of his body and the powers of his mind; his situation and his connexions; are all capable of yielding us boundless and edifying instruction.

In observing mankind, the private and familiar views of their character are by far the most curious, interesting, and profitable. The greater part of our history is composed of minute and common incidents: and little and ordinary things serve more to discover a man, and conduce more to render him useful, than splendid and rare occurrences. Abroad, a man

appears cautious; at home, he is unreserved. Abroad, he is artificial; at home, he is real. Abroad, he is serviceable; at home, he is necessary. And of this we may be fully assured, that a man is in truth what he is in his own family; whether vicious or virtuous, tyrannical or mild, miserable or happy.

My brethren, we are going to enter one of those houses, of which David speaks—a tabernacle 'filled with the voice of rejoicing.'

Domestic felicity is our present subject. Let us consider two things: the IMPORTANCE, and the SOURCE of this happiness.

I. WHAT MAY BE SAID IN COMMENDATION OF IT.

II. WHAT WILL BE NECESSARY TO THE POSSESSION OF IT.

O Thou, who hast said, 'It is not good for man to be alone,' 'God of the families of all the earth,' may thy secret be upon our tabernacles. Under the influence of thy providence and grace, may we derive from our unions all the blessedness they are capable of affording: and, to this end, guide and sanctify our meditations.

I. One of the most agreeable scenes we can ever survey upon earth, is a peaceful and happy family: where friendship comes in to draw more closely the bonds of nature; where the individuals resemble the human body, and if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, and if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice; where every care is divided, every sorrow diminished, every joy redoubled, by discovery, by sympathy, by communion; where mutual confidence prevails, and advice, consolation, and succour are reciprocally given and received. To such a sight God himself calls our attention. 'Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!' Some things are good, but not pleasant; and some things are pleasant, but not good. Here both are combined; and the effect is fragrant as the sacred perfume, and reviving as the influences of Heaven. 'It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the moun-

tains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded his blessing, even life forevermore.' Let us establish the IMPORTANCE of domestic happiness, by taking some particular views of its connexions and influence.

And, First, We may consider it in reference to our AVOCATIONS and CARES. These are numerous and diversified, and demand relaxation and relief. Who could endure perpetual drudgery and fatigue? and what so refreshing, so soothing, so satisfying, as the placid joys of home!

See the traveller. Does duty call him for a season to leave his beloved circle? The image of his earthly happiness continues vividly in his remembrance; it quickens him to diligence; it cheers him under difficulties; it makes him hail the hour which sees his purpose accomplished, and his face turned towards home; it communes with him as he journeys; and he hears the promise which causes him to hope, 'Thou shalt know also that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and not sin.' Oh, the joyful re-union of a divided family; the pleasures of

renewed interview and conversation, after days of absence!

Behold the man of science. He drops the labour and painfulness of research, closes his volume, smooths his wrinkled brows, leaves his study, and unbending himself, stoops to the capacities, yields to the wishes, and mingles with the diversions of his children. And

> 'He will not blush that has a father's heart,
> To take in childish play a childish part;
> But bends his sturdy back to any toy
> That youth takes pleasure in, to please his boy.'

Take the man of trade. What reconciles him to the toil of business? What enables him to endure the fastidiousness and impertinence of customers? What rewards him for so many hours of tedious confinement? By-and-by, the season of intercourse will arrive; he will be embosomed in the caresses of his family; he will behold the desire of his eyes, and the children of his love, for whom he resigns his ease; and in their welfare and smiles he will find his recompense.

Yonder comes the labourer. He has borne the burden and heat of the day: the descend-

ing sun has released him from his toil, and he is hastening home to enjoy repose. Half-way down the lane, by the side of which stands his cottage, his children run to meet him: one he carries, and one he leads. The companion of his humble life is ready to furnish him with his plain repast. See, his toil-worn countenance assumes an air of cheerfulness; his hardships are forgotten; fatigue vanishes; he eats, and is satisfied; the evening fair, he walks with uncovered head around his garden; enters again, and retires to rest: and 'the rest of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much.' Inhabitant of this lonely, lowly dwelling, who can be indifferent to thy comfort! 'Peace be to this house.'

> 'Let not ambition mock thy useful toils,
> Thy HOMELY joys, and destiny obscure;
> Nor grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
> The short and simple annals of the poor.'

Secondly, We may consider this happiness in reference to the AFFLICTIONS OF LIFE. It looks like a general remedy, furnished by the kindness of Providence, to alleviate the troubles which, from various quarters, we unavoidably

feel while passing through this world of vanity and vexation of spirit. How many little sighing vacancies does it fill up! How many cloudy, nervous vapours does it chase from the mind! Whose frowns and gloom will not the mirth of a child dissipate? What corroding anxieties will not retire from the attentions of a virtuous wife! What a consolation is her gentleness! Who has not experienced its healing, enlivening influence, in the day of sickness and in the hour of depression? Is your confidence frequently checked by the baseness and dissimulation of mankind? Here your candor recovers, and you are reconciled to your fellow creatures again. Does the behaviour of too many with whom you have to do, cherish a dissatisfaction which sours life? Here a serenity, a sweetness, spreads over the mind, from the simplicity, openness, and kindness, with which you are surrounded. Are you repulsed by others? Here you are received with open and welcome arms. Does the storm rage without? Behold an asylum within. Here we realize an emblem of the Saviour: it says to us, 'In the world ye shall

have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace.' Here 'the wicked cease from troubling,' and here 'the weary are at rest.'

Thirdly. We may consider this happiness in reference to THE GOOD THINGS OF THIS LIFE. Without this, all will be insipid, all will be useless. Your titles of distinction, and your robes of office, are laid aside before you enter your own dwelling. There the senator, the minister, the lawyer, draw back; and we behold only the husband, the father, the man! There you stand only in those relations in which nature has placed you. There you feel only your personal character. What remains after these deductions are made, ascertains your value. You are to judge of your worth by the honour you command where rank does not overawe; of your importance, by the esteem and admiration you engage when deprived of all adventitious appendages; of your happiness, by the resources you possess to give cheerfulness and charms to those returning hours which no splendor gilds, which no fame inspires, and in which all the attractions of popularity fail. For what would it avail

you to live in popular opinion, and to be followed with applause home to your very door, if you were then to be compelled to continue in the element of discord, the seat of strife, the house of bondage and correction? Imagine yourselves prosperous in your affairs; trade pouring in wealth, your grounds bringing forth plentifully, your cup running over. Misery under your own roof would be sufficient to canker your gold and silver; to corrupt your abundance; to embitter every pleasure; to make you groan, even on a costly sofa, 'All this availeth me nothing!'

Fourthly. Let us consider it in reference to THE SEDUCTIONS AND SNARES OF THE WORLD. From the danger of these, there is no better preservative than the attractions of a family. The more a man feels his welfare lodged in his own house, the more will he prize and love it. The more he is attached to his wife and children, the less will he risk their peace and comfort by hazardous speculations, and mad enterprises in trade. A life of innocency, regularity, and repose, in the affections of his family, will check the rovings of

restless ambition, and secure him from the follies of the pride of life. 'Evil communications corrupt good manners.' But these pleasing cords will draw him back from 'the counsel of the ungodly,' 'the way of sinners,' 'the seat of the scornful.' In vain will he be tempted to go abroad for company or for pleasure, when home supplies him with both. 'And what,' says he, 'are the amusements and dissipations of the world? I have better enjoyments already: enjoyments springing fresh from the growth, the improvement, the culture of our rising charge; from our rural walks; from our social evenings; from our reading and conversation; from our cheerful, lively, mutual devotion. Here are pleasures perpetually renewing, and which never cloy. Here are entertainments placed easily within our reach, and which require no laborious preparation, no costly arrangement. Here I acknowledge only the dominion of nature; and follow only the bias of inclination. Here I have no weaknesses to hide, no mistakes to dread. Here my gratifications are attended with no disgrace, no remorse. They leave

no stain, no sting behind. I fear no reproach from my understanding, no reckoning from my conscience; my prayers are not hindered. My heart is made better; I am softened, prepared for duty, allured to the throne of grace. And can I be induced to exchange all this, O ye votaries of the world, for your anxieties, confusion, agitations, and expense?

'Who will show me any good?' is the cry. The world passing along hears it, and says, Follow me; emulate this splendor; mix with this throng; pursue these diversions. We comply. We run, and we run in vain: the prize was nigh us when we began; but our folly drew us away from it. Let us return home, and we shall find it. Let us remember that happiness prefers calmness to noise, and the shades to publicity; that it depends more upon things cheap and common, than upon things expensive and singular: that it is not an exotic which we are to import from the ends of the earth, but a plant which grows in our own field, and in our own garden. Every man may be made happy, if you could induce him to make a proper estimate of happiness;

if you could keep him from judging after outward appearances; if you could persuade him to stoop, rather than to aspire; to kneel, rather than to fly. To confine us to our respective stations, God has wisely rendered happiness only attainable in them: were it placed, not in the way of duty, but on the other side of the boundary, the very position would lead us astray, and seduce us to transgress. But home is not always heaven, nor is domestic life necessarily productive of domestic happiness. Hence it becomes needful,

II. To open its SOURCES, and examine on what it DEPENDS.

It does not depend upon RANK and AFFLUENCE. It is confined to no particular condition: the servant may enjoy it, as well as the master; the mechanic, as well as the nobleman. It exhilarates the cottage, as well as the palace. What am I saying? What says common opinion? Does it not invariably associate more enjoyment with the lowly roof, than with the towering mansion? Ask those who have risen from inferior life, whether their satisfac-

tion has increased with their circumstances; whether they have never advanced to the brow of the eminence they have ascended, and, looking down, sighed, 'Ah! happy vale, from how much was I sheltered while I was in thee!'

We may also observe, that some individuals seem much more qualified to enjoy this happiness than others. Some have little taste for any thing. They are made up of stupidities: they have eyes, but they see not; ears, but hear not. They are the automatons of nature; the machines of Providence; doing the work which the constitution of the world requires of them, devoid of any lively emotions. If they ever feel, it is only from the impression of something tumultuous and violent; if they are ever pleased, it is only with factitious joys. But others are full of life and sensibility. They are susceptible of delicate impressions: they love every thing tranquil; relish every thing simple; enjoy every thing natural; and are touched and dissolved by a thousand pleasing circumstances which convey nothing to others.

There are, however, some things which have an indispensable influence in producing

and maintaining the welfare of families, which fall more properly under our cultivation. ORDER, GOOD TEMPER, GOOD SENSE, RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES. These will bless thy dwelling, and fill thy 'tabernacle with the voice of rejoicing.'

First. Without ORDER you can never rule well your own house. 'God is not the God of confusion.' He loves order, order pervades all his works. He overlooks nothing. 'He calleth the stars by their names.' 'He numbereth the hairs of our head.' 'He appointeth the moon for seasons; and the sun knoweth his going down.' There is no discord, no clashing, in all the immense, the amazing whole! He has interposed his authority, and enjoined us 'to do every thing decently, and in order.' And this command is founded in a regard to our advantage. It calls upon you to lay down rules, and to walk by them; to assign every thing its proper place, its allowance of time, its degree of importance; to observe regularity in your meals, in your devotions, in your expenses. From order spring frugality, economy, charity. From order result

beauty, harmony, concurrence. Without order there can be no government, no happiness. Peace flies from confusion. Disorder entangles all our affairs; hides from us the end, and keeps from us the clew; we lose self-possession; and become miserable, because perplexed, hurried, oppressed, easily provoked.

Secondly. Many things will arise to try your TEMPER: and he is unqualified for social life who has no rule over his own spirit: 'who cannot bear,' to use the words of a good writer, 'the frailties of his fellow creatures with common charity, and the vexations of life with common patience.' Peter, addressing wives, reminds them that 'the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price.' And Solomon often mentions the opposite blemish in illustrating the female character. 'It is better to dwell in a corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house.' 'The contentions of a wife are a continual dropping'—and so on. We should deem it invidious to exemplify this imperfection in one sex only: we would address *you* equally; and call upon you, as you value a

peaceful abode, to maintain a control over your tempers. Beware of passion; say little when under irritation; turn aside; take time to reflect and to cool; a word spoken unadvisedly with your lips may produce a wound which weeks cannot heal. 'I would reprove thee,' said the philosopher, 'were I not angry.' It is a noble suggestion. Apply it in your reprehension of servants and correction of children.

But there is something against which you should be more upon your guard than occasional sallies of passion—I mean habitual pettishness. The former may be compared to a brisk shower which is soon over; the latter, to a sleet, drizzling rain driving all the day long. The mischief which is such a disturber of social enjoyment, is not the anger which is lengthened into malice, or vented in revenge; but that which oozes out in constant fretfulness, murmuring, and complaint: it is that which renders a man not formidable, but troublesome; it is that which converts him, not into a tiger, but into a gnat. Good humour is the cordial, the balm of life. The possessor of it spreads satisfaction wherever he comes, and he par-

takes of the pleasure he gives. Easy in himself, he is seldom offended with those around him. Calm and placid within, every thing without wears the most favourable appearance; while the mind, agitated by peevishness or passion, like a ruffled pool, even reflects every agreeable and lovely image false and distorted.

Thirdly. The influence and advantage of GOOD SENSE are incalculable. What streams, what vessels, are the noisy, the shallow, the empty! Who are the unyielding? The ignorant, who mistake obstinacy for firmness. Who are the infallible? They who have not reflection enough to see how liable and how likely we are to err; they who cannot comprehend how much it adds to a man's wisdom to discover, and to his humility to acknowledge, a fault. Good sense will preserve us from censoriousness; will lead us to distinguish circumstances; to draw things from the dark situation of prejudice which rendered them frightful, that we may candidly survey them in open day. Good sense will keep us from looking after visionary perfection. The infirmities I behold are not peculiar to my con-

nexions ; others, if equally near, would betray the same : universal excellence is unattainable ; no one can please in every thing. And who am I, to demand a freedom from imperfections in others, while I am encompassed with infirmities myself?' Good sense will lead us to study dispositions, peculiarities, accommodations ; to weigh consequences ; to determine what to observe and what to pass by ; when to be immoveable and when to yield. Good sense will produce good manners ; will keep us from taking freedoms and handling things roughly ; for love is delicate, confidence is tender. Good sense will never agitate claims of superiority ; it will teach us to 'submit ourselves one to another, in the fear of God.' Good sense will lead persons to regard their own duties, rather than to recommend those of others.

Fourthly. We must go beyond all this, and remind you of those RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES by which you are to be governed. These are to be found in the word of God ; and as many as walk according to this rule, mercy and peace shall be upon them. God has engaged that if you will walk in his way, you

shall find rest unto your souls. If it be said, There are happy families without religion, I would answer, First, There is a difference between appearances and reality. Secondly, If we believe the scripture, this is impossible: 'the way of transgressors is hard: there is no peace, saith my God, unto the wicked.' Thirdly, Religion secures those duties, upon the performance of which the happiness of households depends. Would any man have reason to complain of servants, of children, or of any other relation, if they were all influenced by the spirit, and regulated by the dictates of the gospel? Much of religion lies in the discharge of these relative duties; and to enforce these, religion brings forward motives the most powerful, and always binding; calls in conscience, and God, and heaven, and hell.— Fourthly, Religion attracts the divine blessing, and all we possess or enjoy depends upon its smiles. God can elevate or sink us in the esteem of others: he can send us business or withhold it: he can command or forbid thieves to rob, and flames to devour us: he can render all we have satisfying, or distasteful; and

they that honour him he will honour. 'The house of the wicked shall be overthrown, but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish. The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked; but he blesseth the habitation of the just.' Finally, Religion prepares us for all events. If we succeed, it keeps our prosperity from destroying us. If we suffer, it preserves us from fainting in the day of adversity. It turns our losses into gains; it exalts our joys into praises; it makes prayers of our sighs; and, in all the uncertainties of time and changes of the world, it sheds on the mind a 'peace which passeth all understanding.' It unites us to each other, not only as creatures, but as Christians; not only as strangers and pilgrims upon earth, but as heirs of glory, honour, and immortality.—For you must separate; it is useless to keep back the mortifying truth. It was the condition upon which your union was formed. O man! it was a mortal finger upon which you placed the ring, vain emblem of perpetuity. O woman! it was a dying hand that imposed it. After so many mutual and growing attachments, to separate! What is to

be done here? O Religion, Religion, come, and relieve us in a case where every other assistance fails. Come, and teach us not to wrap up our chief happiness in the creature. Come, and bend our wills to the pleasure of the Almighty, and enable us to say, 'It is the Lord! let him do what seemeth him good: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; and blessed be the name of the Lord.' Come, and tell us that they are disposed of infinitely to their advantage; that the separation is temporary; that a time of re-union will come; that we shall see their faces and hear their voices again.

Take two Christians, who have been walking together, like 'Zechariah and Elisabeth, in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless.' Is the connexion dissolved by death? No. We take the Bible along with us; and inscribe on their tomb, 'Pleasant in life, and in death not divided.' Is the one removed before the other? He becomes an attraction to the other; he draws him forward, and is waiting to 'receive him into everlasting habitations.' Let us suppose a pious family re-uniting together, after following each other

successively down to the grave. How unlike every present meeting! Here our intercourse is chilled with the certainty of separation: there we shall meet, to part no more; we shall be forever with each other, and forever with the Lord. Now affliction often enters our circle, and the distress of one is the concern of all: then we shall 'rejoice with them that rejoice,' but not 'weep with them that weep;' for 'all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and the days of our mourning shall be ended.'

Come then, my dear hearers, and invite the religion of the blessed Jesus, this one thing needful, this universal benefactor of mankind. It has 'the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.' It secures our individual and our relative happiness. It brings peace into our bosoms, and joy into our dwellings. Let us resolve to pursue it ourselves; let us enforce it upon our connexions. Let us dedicate our tabernacles to God; offer the morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and of praise: and whatever be the determination of others, let each of us say, for ourselves, 'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'

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